



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Dog Rescuer Rebounds from Devastating Fire

By Lorraine Sanders

As victims of tragedy know all too well, what takes years to build can suffer destruction in a matter of moments. That sad truth hit home, quite literally, for Rocket Dog Rescue founder Pali Boucher just days before Christmas, when fire sent her Ellsworth Street apartment near Bernal Heights up in flames, claiming the lives of five defenseless animals.

Around 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 21, Boucher, whose monthly 24th Street adoption fairs have brought dogs into many a loving Noe Valley home, laid out blankets and fresh water for three foster dogs in her care. Three additional dogs, Boucher's own pets, were out on their regular Friday walk with a dog walker. She said goodbye to the dogs, her cheeky pet parrot Chester, and an injured pigeon she had taken in, before heading to the Noe Valley Pet Company to buy food.

"I gave all of them little kisses and said, 'I'll be back,' and within minutes, there was so much devastation," Boucher recalls.



Rocket Dog founder Pali Boucher lost her home and five animals in a fire Dec. 21. But she will continue her dog rescue mission with the help of friends and her trusty hound Elwood.
Photo by Pamela Gerard

Not a half-hour after she'd left, Boucher received a call from a neighbor. Her house, the top floor in a duplex with a yard for the dogs to play in, was on fire. When she arrived at the scene soon after, seven firetrucks were there, but her apartment and all its contents had already been

eaten up by the flames. The cause of the fire was pegged on faulty wiring inside the building's walls.

"Everything in the house was destroyed. The windows were blasted out,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

When Cupid Follows You to Work: How 3 Couples Keep It Going

By Heidi Anderson

Come Valentine's Day, there will be more romance brewing behind some Noe Valley storefronts than contained in all the heart-shaped products on the shelves. Here's a glimpse of three Noe Valley couples who live and work together—and haven't gotten tired of either.

They'll Always Have Paris... and 24th Street

Diana Barrand and Max Braud met in Paris 23 years ago, when they worked at the same bank. Barrand had been there for a couple of years; Braud was working in foreign exchange rates while helping out with his family's brasserie on the side.

Soon, though, Braud felt the pull of his family's café-owning history and opened

his own small wine bar as a hobby. When it became his sole occupation and he needed some help, Barrand jumped in.

"I was ready for a change," she says.

The wine bar did fine; their romance even better: they wound up married. As for the wine bar, both had enough business sense to see they needed to expand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Library Reopens In March After Two-Year Facelift

By Corrie M. Anders

Two years, three weeks, and five days after it closed for renovation, the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Branch Library will reopen next month with great pomp and circumstance.

On March 8, Mayor Gavin Newsom will cut the ceremonial ribbon and give the public its first look inside the historic Carnegie library at 451 Jersey Street. District 8 Supervisor Bevan Dufty and City Librarian Luis Herrera will join in the 1 p.m. grand reopening—the latest hooray in the city's \$106 million campaign to renovate 17 branch libraries.

"It's very nice," said Alice McCloud, who was appointed branch manager several months after the library shut down in February 2006 for \$5.7 million in improvements. "It looks so much brighter and lighter."

The long-awaited reopening also will set off a weeklong celebration of literary events at neighborhood bookstores, restaurants, and the Saturday Farmers' Market on 24th Street.

"Everybody is really excited that the library is reopening," said Kim Drew, chair of the Noe Valley Library Campaign, which helped raised more than \$200,000 in private donations for the branch. Its return fills one of the "gaping holes" in the community's civic fabric, she said.

Worries that the nearly 100-year-old building might be dangerous in a major earthquake—and the need to bring the facility into the modern era—prompted the facelift, which was accomplished by Carey & Company Architecture of San Francisco. The building's reincarnation would no doubt please philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, whose generosity helped

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



Partners in love and work for more than 15 years, Max Braud and Diana Barrand will likely spend Valentine's Day tending the hearts of their customers at Le Zinc, their romantic French bistro on 24th Street.
Photo by Pamela Gerard

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Valentine Smile. Youngsters Seneca and Darius put on the charm while shopping at Cover to Cover Booksellers on Castro St.

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- A – YES — Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Bonds
- B – YES — Police Deferred Retirement Option
- C – NO — Alcatraz Island Peace Center Policy Statement

— STATE PROPOSITIONS —

- 91 – NO — Transportation Funding
- 92 – YES — Community College Funding
- 93 – YES — Term Limits Reform
- 94 – NO — Indian Gaming Compact Amendment,
Pechanga Bond
- 95 – NO — Indian Gaming Compact Amendment,
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- 96 – NO — Indian Gaming Compact Amendment,
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- 97 – NO — Indian Gaming Compact Amendment,
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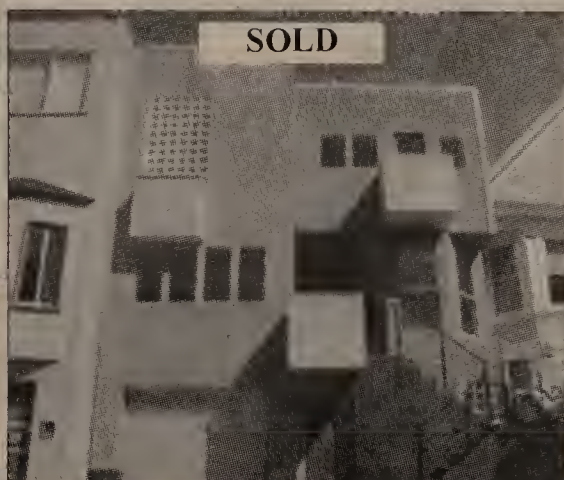
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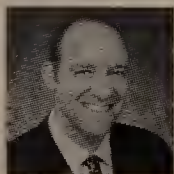
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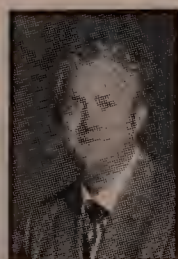
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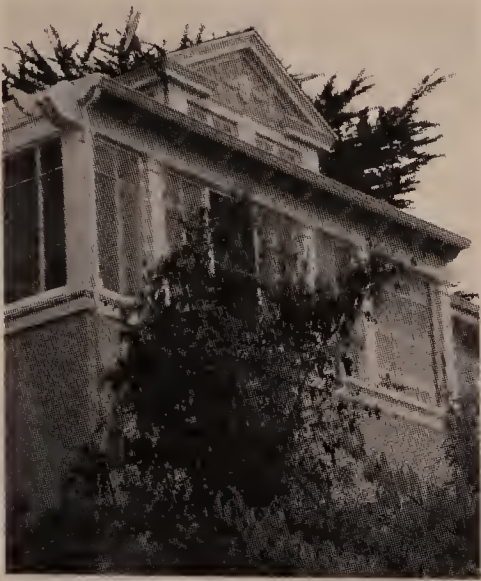
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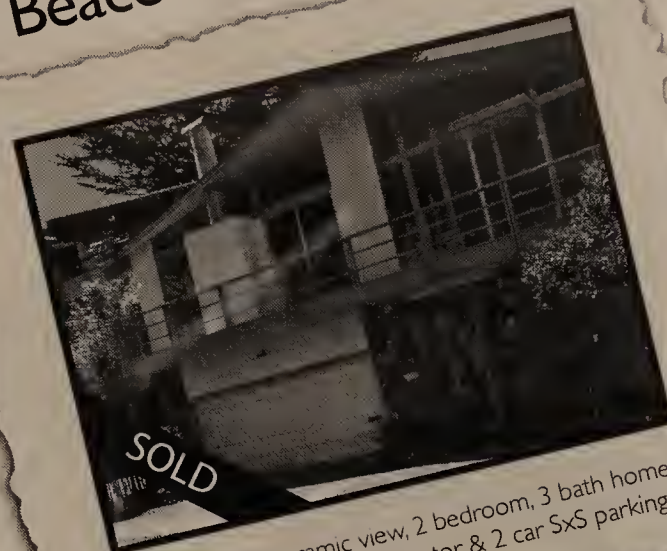
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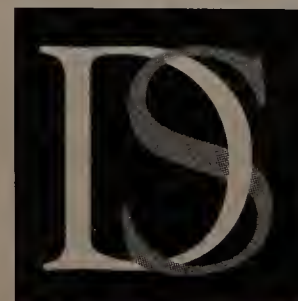
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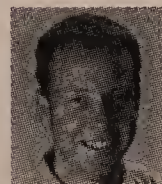
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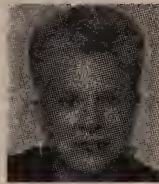
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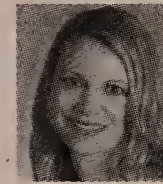
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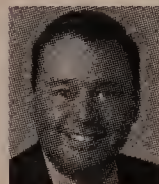
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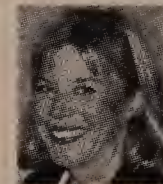
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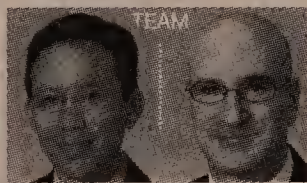
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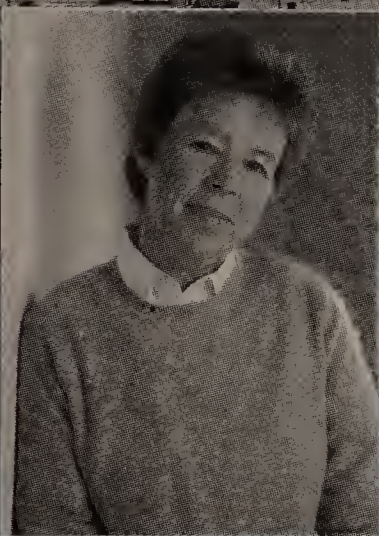
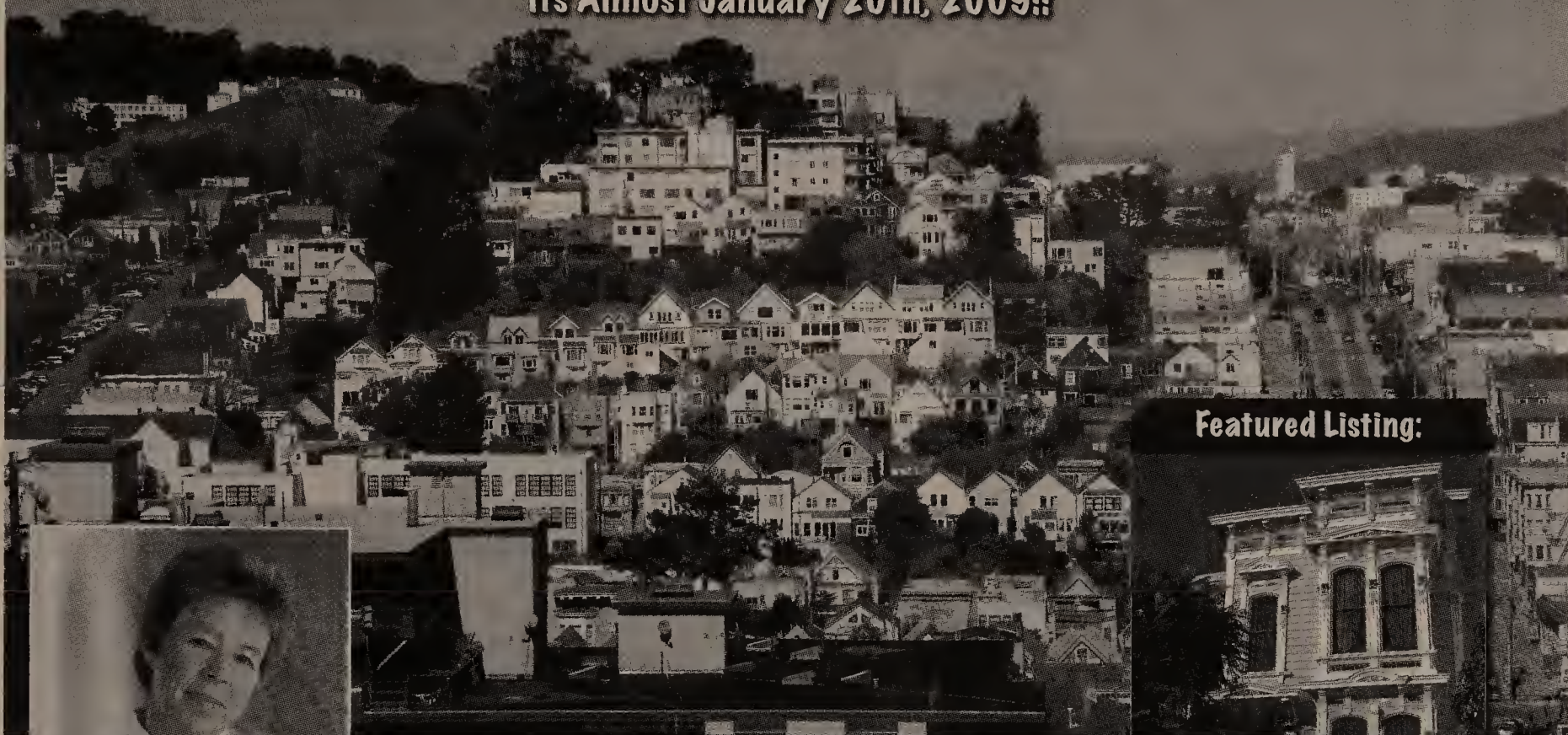
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LETTERS 41¢

Celebration for Bob Johnson

Editor:

Bob Johnson passed away on Jan. 3, 2008, in his home overlooking his beloved city. He was surrounded by his family when he passed away. He was a native of California and a resident of San Francisco for the past 95 years. He was the "Tamale in Our Midst" in your pages [November 2006 *Voice*], as he owned and operated Johnson's Tamale Grotto for many years. He had lived on Liberty Hill for over 60 years. Bob died as he lived, his way.

As a tribute to a wonderful life, an open house will be held in his honor on Saturday, Feb 16, from 1 to 5 pm at 400 Liberty Street, Apt. 4. Anyone who knew Bob is invited to attend. He loved Noe Valley, and we his family are so appreciative of the many kind and caring people who shared a hello and a smile with Bob on his daily outings to 24th Street.

Bob's family would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the staff at Savor, the merchants of 24th Street, and Bob's Liberty Hill neighbors, who were so kind and caring through the years.

Please come, share a story, and a laugh for this wonderful man.

Chris, Cathy, Clark, and Craig Haley
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An Accident Waiting to Happen

Editor:

I'm writing to express my concern over the safety of pedestrians in our area. I walk to my gym on Church Street in the morning, and at least once a week I am



Ninety-six-year-old Bob Johnson was still driving his red Mercedes convertible with the "Tamale" license plate when the *Voice* wrote a story about him in 2006. Friends and family will celebrate his life on Feb. 16 at 400 Liberty Street. Photo by Beverly Tharp

almost run over by a driver who isn't paying attention to the crosswalks (or the pedestrians in those crosswalks). Drivers frequently go right through the intersections without stopping.

This problem isn't just occurring in the morning. One Sunday afternoon, I saw two drivers rolling through intersections—one on a cell phone, one just not paying attention. Can you imagine the consequences if even one pedestrian is hit in our neighborhood?

To Noe drivers: Please be more observant of your surroundings. Stop completely at stop signs, and look both ways at the crosswalk before you go through an intersection.

To Noe pedestrians, joggers, and dogs: Please be extraobservant and aware of the cars that share the streets with you.

Karen Halstead
27th Street

Marathoners Come of Age

Editor:

Congratulations to Kay Teiber on completing yet another marathon ["No Finish Line in Sight for Noe Marathoner," December 2007/January 2008 *Voice*]. Very impressive! I too am a Noe Valley runner who started running in her 40s in the neighborhood, and I still run here some days. Unlike Kay, however, I haven't run a marathon, although I completed my first half-marathon last year and am planning to do another in February.

I am writing because Kay expressed a wish to run with more people of her own generation—people in their 60s and up. Well, I can help! I am a member of a running club called Dolphin South End Runners (DSE). It was founded in 1966 and is the oldest and largest running club in San Francisco. We are a group of runners of all stripes: fast, medium, slow...young, middle-aged, and not so young, including runners in their 70s.

I'd like to invite Kay or any other Noe Valley resident to try one of the weekly races in and around San Francisco (most Sundays) or one of our training runs in Golden Gate Park (every Saturday). There is no commitment required, and after a few runs, you will be able to determine if this is the place for you. I joined four years ago, after just two "visits."

If you'd like to learn more about DSE, go to <http://dserunners.com>. Check out past race results and the photo gallery to get an idea of the diversity among our runners. And if you'd like to talk to me about the club or running, email me at suzana@network172.com.

In the meantime, keep on running!

Suzana Seban
Clipper Street

A Dog Run Dedicated to Joby

The new dog run at the Upper Noe Valley Recreation Center is finally nearing completion, but the pivotal force that fought for it for the past nine years is gone. Joby Shinoff, a 22-year resident of Church Street, lost his fight with multiple myeloma on Nov. 19, 2007. Now we who will benefit from his efforts want to remember Joby by naming the dog run after him.

In the 1990s, the field at the rec center was closed to the many dogs who had used it each morning and evening. Joby started a signature campaign to have a facility where dogs could play off-leash. He worked with the city's Recreation and Park Department for many months, and a temporary dog run was established. For the next eight years, he continued to work with perseverance and patience to get a permanent dog run built—with lights, a drinking fountain, benches, trees, and proper fencing. He never wavered from his goal despite many obstacles, and he never lost his sense of fairness or sense of humor.

Joby adored his wife Holly and his daughter, Amy Bonvini, who currently lives in Italy. But Joby's devotion to dogs, especially his yellow lab Lily, was legendary. Knowing this, Holly held Joby's surprise birthday party in the Upper Noe dog run in 2005, and UCSF hospital allowed Lily to visit him in the ICU during his last stay there. Joby's twice-daily visits to the park were always occasions of great discussion about dogs and politics, and his many friends will always feel his presence at the park.

To have the dog run named for Joby, we need to present an appeal to the city that would include a petition from members of the community. Petitions have been placed in the following places along Church Street: Noe Valley Pet Company, Drewes Meat Market, Church Apothecary, and Lovejoy's Tea Room.

If you are interested in signing, please



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do so at these locations or write to Neil Mosher at nemosanfran@yahoo.com and we will arrange to get a petition to you. Letters of support, anecdotes, and memories would also be most helpful. When we have a completed appeal package, it will be presented to Rec and Park, with the backing of Supervisor Bevan Dufty. Many thanks for your help.

Joby Shinoff was a wonderful man and a terrific advocate for Noe Valley. He made neighbors of our neighborhood.

—Neil Mosher, Carol Bakker, and the
Day Park Dogs Group

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

1021 Sanchez Street
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www.noevalleyvoice.com

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The *Voice* welcomes your letters, photos, and stories, particularly on topics relating to Noe Valley. All items should include your name, address, and phone number, and may be edited for brevity or clarity. (Unsigned letters will not be considered for publication.) Unsolicited contributions will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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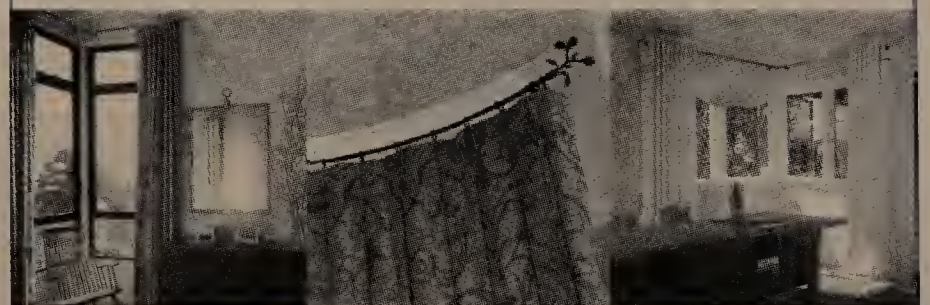


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Library Ready to Be Unveiled March 8

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

finance the original two-story Beaux Arts edifice in 1916.

Much of the earthquake retrofit work is hidden from view. But new lighting, accessible bathrooms, a new elevator to the second floor, a "more welcoming" children's room, hundreds of new books, a computer-laden multimedia room with the latest movies, and restored woodwork and fixtures will be readily apparent.

"I think it looks beautiful," said Nancy Goldenberg, lead architect on the project.

Goldenberg said library visitors would find two especially striking features among the changes at the branch: the like-new restoration of the elaborate ornamental ceiling, and the prominence of the building's Spanish-style façade of brick and terra cotta.

"The ceiling is pretty special in the main reading room," she said. "The challenge was getting all the structure [necessary] for the seismic upgrade in, without damaging the ceiling. We protected it, and areas that were impacted were carefully restored." In addition, glaring fluorescent lighting has been replaced with softer illumination from pendants that mimic fixtures from earlier times.

"The other thing is, everybody will be struck by how much better the facade looks now that the building is clean and the large pine trees that were overgrown are no longer there," Goldenberg said. "You can actually see the building now, and it looks bright and gorgeous."

McCloud, the branch manager, said the library planned to boost its collection of books and audiovisuals to 35,000, from an estimated 30,000 on the shelves when the library closed. A sizable increase in DVDs, CDs, and audio books also is an acknowledgment of the swift technological advances that have taken place in recent times.

"Noe didn't have a lot of new materials in the past. The collection wasn't that exciting," McCloud said. "Now I will have more of a variety, and I'll keep my finger on the pulse of what the community wants."

Book Week in Noe

To help celebrate the library's reopening, local groups including the Friends of Noe Valley have decided to stage a Noe Valley Book Week from March 8 to 15.

"It's nice to have the whole community



Librarians (left to right) Evelyn Alvarado, Illeana Neves, Alice McCloud (who is also branch manager), and Lourdes Fortunado have their hands full getting ready for the grand reopening of the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library the second week of March.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

thinking about one thing for a week," said Friends member Mindy Kershner, who is spearheading neighborhood involvement. "It's going to be wonderful."

The week will include three days of Noe Valley authors readings at neighborhood bookstores. The first will take place March 11 at the San Francisco Mystery Bookstore. Cover to Cover follows with a March 12 program, and the final event, featuring nature writers from *California Coast and Ocean* magazine, will be held March 13 at Phoenix Books and Records.

Not to be left out, many local restaurants will dish up special literary fare during the week. For example, the Noe Valley Deli will offer an *Alexandria Quartet* salad, and Savor Restaurant will serve Cannery Row Tacos, a tribute to John Steinbeck's classic.

"All the restaurants are thinking up something to tie into books," Kershner said. Look for the "Literary Plate" signs in their windows.

The neighborhood also will launch a drive to share its literary largesse with less fortunate San Francisco residents. Residents will be asked to donate new or gen-

tly used books, which will later be distributed to family shelters in the city. Books can be dropped off at collection boxes at the Saturday Farmers' Market on March 8 and 15.

For more information on Book Week events, call Kershner at 415-377-3890.

Castro Branch Is Next

Don't be surprised to see Castro District neighbors checking out books at the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Branch over the next 18 months. That's because the Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Memorial Branch Library will be closing March 1 for its own renovation.

City officials expect to spend \$5.4 million to retrofit the branch, located at 1 José Sarria Court near 16th and Market streets. The amenities will be similar to Noe Valley's, including new computers and other technological upgrades, an area for teenagers, new bathrooms, and better lighting.

The 106-year-old branch is the second oldest in the city. The original building was severely damaged in the 1957 Daly City earthquake and replaced in 1961 at a cost of \$192,335.

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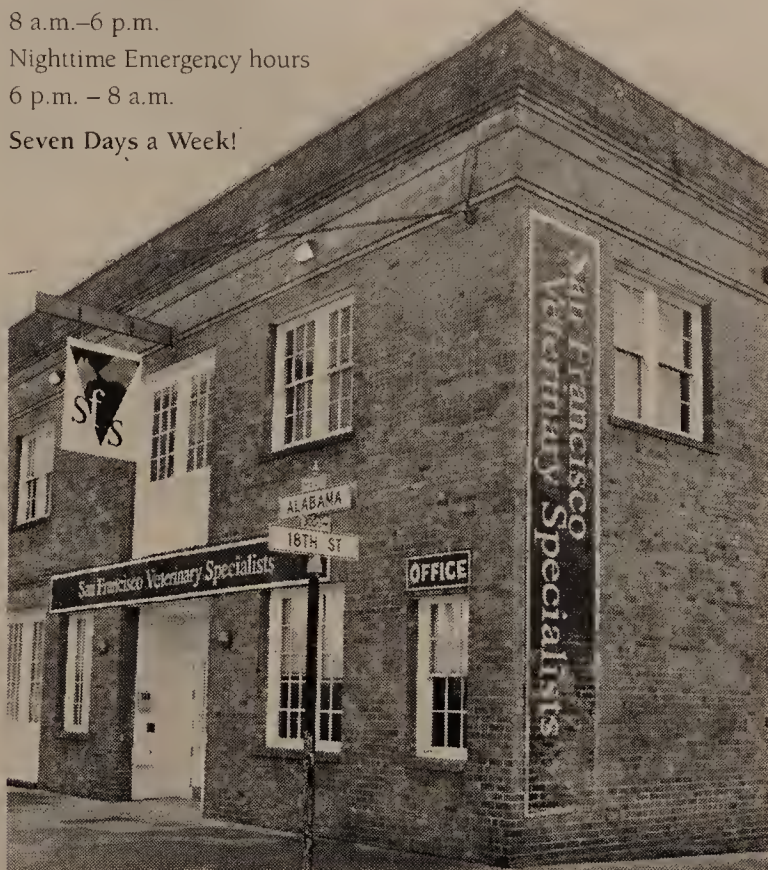
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Noe Gets Primary Fever: The presidential campaign shifted into high gear in Noe Valley last month, as local supporters of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and others held house parties, manned phone banks, and attended big rallies in preparation for "Super Tuesday," Feb. 5. The *Voice* captured Obama fans Ryan Levinson and Lucy Irwin at the Noe Valley Farmers' Market in mid-January, debating their candidate's chances with Jane Willson (with dog Rufus) and Ian Christoph. As we went to press, local Obama supporters were readying to rally with Sen. John Kerry at Everett Middle School, 450 Church Street, on Feb. 2, 9:30 a.m. Meanwhile, Clinton followers were gathering the same day for a "Super Saturday" party 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at campaign headquarters, 1122 Howard Street. The Noe Valley Democratic Club will conduct a post-election analysis with pollster David Binder at its Feb. 20 meeting (7:30 p.m.) at St. Philip's Church Hall, 725 Diamond Street.

Photo by Pamela Gerard



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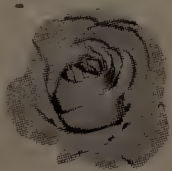
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(Trust Building Tip #58)

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Three Couples Who Live, Love and Work Together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in order to really make a living at it.

"And we had itchy feet," Barrand says.

They set off to America for, well, bigger things. New York was too urban. Chicago wasn't near an ocean. But San Francisco was just right. It had the sea, the wilderness, a cosmopolitan palate—everything they needed for the kind of restaurant they wanted to create.

The couple found a spot on 24th Street and established the charming French bistro Le Zinc (4063 24th Street near Castro). That was six years ago.

Braud says the boundaries in their work relationship were hazy in the beginning.

"At first, I was more involved in organizing the whole restaurant, including the wine list," he recalls. "But she is so organized, she just took her part over, and it's been that way ever since."

Now, Chef Braud handles the kitchen—menu and cook staff—and Barrand deals with what is known as the front of the house—wait staff, table seating, and accounting.

The couple seem to enjoy the weekly rhythm and separate responsibilities they've honed over 15 years of marriage and business.

The other key ingredient: time away from each other. "You have to have a total break by yourself sometimes," says Barrand. "I have my nights off when Max is at work, and he has his when I'm at work." Barrand likes to watch a movie without commentary from her husband, and Braud is a football fan.

"I can't stand American football," says Barrand. So she works on Sunday nights.

Finally, they garnish their romance with a sweet treat. After pulling a combined seven-day week for several weeks, the two get away for four days all alone to some place far from San Francisco. Recently, they stole away to Big Sur.

"If you don't take a decent break, your brain is always on the routine," says Braud. Adds Barrand, "We try not to talk about work at all then. It's a break for us. We get perspective."

Valentine's Day at Le Zinc: Prix-fixe menu with choices including oysters, caviar, lamb, salmon, duck, beef, and a special dessert plate just for the occasion (\$65).

'We Really Didn't Like Each Other'

Celia Sack and Paula Harris met a dozen years ago through a mutual friend. One laughed too much, the other too little. No sparks. No problem.

But later they wound up at a literary event where a shared love of books got them talking. Two years later, they were in love.

Sack kept on at her rare-books auction job, and Harris continued her work with the Names Project Foundation, which preserves and promotes the AIDS Memorial Quilt. When a dog-walking business fell into Harris' lap, she took it. She soon found, in booming late-'90s Noe Valley, that the pet parade was too much for one woman to handle.

"I was ready to change what I was doing," Sack says. "So I helped out."

Both had been daydreaming about owning their own business, and soon dog-walking was lucrative enough to enable them to open a pet-supply store, Noe Valley Pet Company (now in its ninth year at 1451 Church Street at Cesar Chavez).

Something else was working for the pair, who live in the Castro.

"Laughter!" the two bark in unison.

"Actually, I think the best advice we ever got," says Harris, "was to maintain our 'separate spheres.'"

Like Braud and Barrand of Le Zinc, one runs the front of the store and the other manages the back. Aside from an incident here and there (don't ask them about a delivery mishap a few weeks ago), they follow that rule.

So day-in day-out, don't they ever get tired of each other? Sack and Harris have an unusual ritual to maintain sanity.

"Well, um, we drive to work separately almost every day," says Harris. It was her idea.

"Paula can listen to the radio station she wants, even sneak a cigarette," says Sack, who admits driving two cars to and from the same location each day isn't the greenest plan. "But it's the space we need."

Even these two will say a five-minute drive to work alone doesn't solve all the problems that running a small business can dish out. For that, Sack and Harris rely on their customers.



On the rare occasion when fur flies at Noe Valley Pet Company, Celia Sack and Paula Harris (right) rely on their sense of humor to pull them through. Photos by Beverly Tharp

"We try very hard not to snipe at each other during the day," Harris says. "But sometimes if we're overwhelmed, we will argue about something." That's usually when, as if on cue, a customer will walk in with a pressing issue with regard to, say, his dog's intestinal idiosyncrasies.

"One of us will get pulled into the conversation, the other will get distracted by the phone," says Sack. "Minutes later, we'll look at each other and say, 'What were we fighting about?'"

Both say the best part of running the store is sharing good and bad times with customers and each other, everything from pet adoptions (and losses) to events like 9/11. Says Harris, "I can't imagine us not running this store together."

Valentine's Day at Noe Valley Pet Company: Fall in love on Saturday, Feb. 9, when Grateful Dogs Rescue brings adoptable dogs to the store, noon to 3 p.m.

Love or Money? They'll Take Love

Gene Ginsberg and Joanie Basso-Ginsberg met at a Philadelphia hospital where she was a nurse and he frequently stopped in as part of his art-therapy work with drug rehabilitation patients. That was 1975. Nowadays, they run the venerable PastaGina (741 Diamond Street near 24th Street). How did they get from there to here?

"Joanie's family comes from the north and the south of Italy," Ginsberg says, meaning she was steeped in both types of cooking since birth.

"We got kind of tired of the East Coast thing," Ginsberg says, "and friends told me it was great to come out here." So in 1977, they moved to San Francisco, where Basso-Ginsberg took a nursing job at a hospital, and he continued working in drug rehab. When the chance to co-own a bar on 24th Street opened up, Ginsberg took it on and discovered his management skills. The two married in 1978.

Basso-Ginsberg had been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a genetic intestinal disorder, when she was 19. In San Francisco, she had an episode of ill health that forced her to quit her nursing job. Still, the couple hosted great parties, where she served food from her family recipes.

When she felt better, she took a part-time job at Auntie Pasta. Ginsberg followed and managed several of the Auntie Pasta stores. The chain grew fast but ended up going bankrupt in the mid-'90s. The old Auntie Pasta spot was ripe for something new. "We knew we could do our own foods—and we wanted to open up a local shop five blocks from our house," says Ginsberg. His wife adds, "We still have the same cooks since we opened!" That was 1995.

Joanie supervised all the food preparation, and Gene, known to friends as "Gino," managed the look and feel of the store. And so was born PastaGina, a gourmet deli featuring homemade pasta and sauces, confections, olives, wine, and other upscale dishes.

Easy as pizza pie? Not at all. The two had to work long hours and manage a string of small-business woes during bust economic times. Recently, Basso-Ginsberg had her longest struggle with Crohn's. "At one point I was away from the shop almost a year," she says. "The shop then, it was all Gene. He had to wear all the hats."

Ginsberg adds that his wife would sometimes direct PastaGina's kitchen from her hospital bed, phone to her ear and clipboard in her hand.

They still feel lucky to have made it through some tough times running their small neighborhood business.

"That saying, you know, 'For love or money'? For us it's for the love," says Basso-Ginsberg.

The couple recently signed a new lease on Diamond Street, and will soon open a booth at the Noe Valley Farmers' Market.

This summer they'll be celebrating 30 years of marriage.

Valentine's Day at PastaGina: Special take-home dinner for two (\$20), which includes: pasta or ravioli, sauce, house-blended cheese, and a mix of cookies, cupcakes, and truffles. Also recommended is a Seghesio zinfandel (\$23.95) and the "pastry of love," a fresh homemade cannoli stuffed with sweet cheese and chocolate chips (\$4.95 each). ■



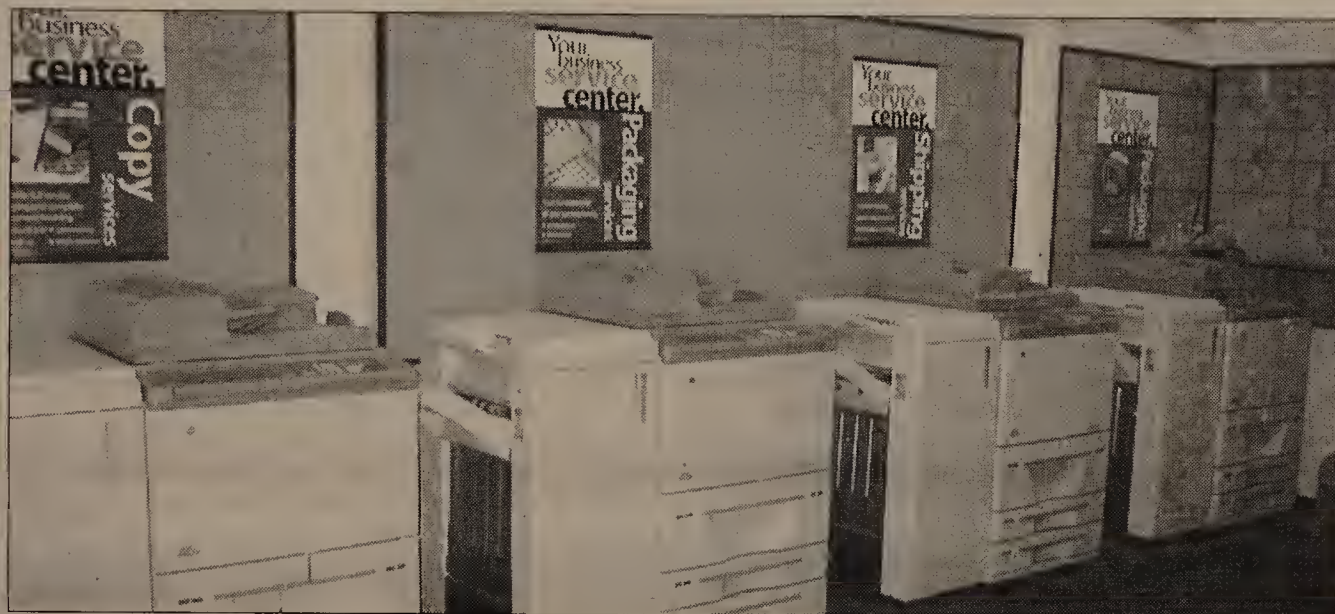
Joanie Basso-Ginsberg and Gene Ginsberg have been through thick and thin at PastaGina on Diamond Street, but their love always prevails.



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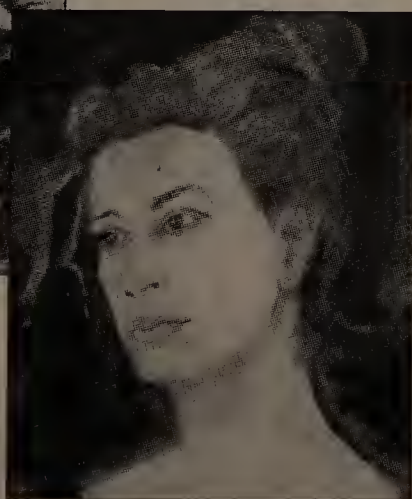


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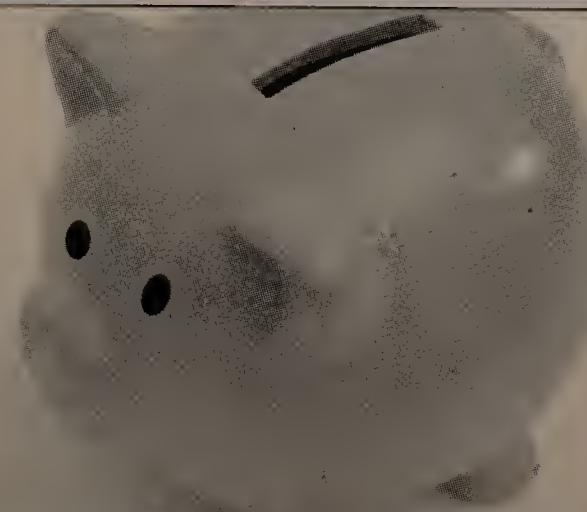
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Sad Day for Rocket Dog Rescue

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

all the clothes gone, my art was smashed. Even the smoke alarm had melted down the wall. But the damage was the loss of the animals. I have a really difficult time figuring out how to make sense of that," Boucher said with obvious difficulty.

Parrot and 3 Dogs Among Victims

Boucher had known Chester, the parrot, longest. He came into Boucher's life as an egg 10 years ago, when an HIV-positive friend and bird rescuer gave him to her. Boucher, who is HIV-positive herself, hand-fed Chester when he hatched, and fashioned a soft-sided birdcage into a souped-up bird backpack, complete with toys, seed cups, and curtains, so she could take the parrot with her wherever she went. When Boucher's friend later died of AIDS, the bird lived on as a constant symbol of their friendship.

Then there was Stewie the World's Most Diabolical Chihuahua (a.k.a. Stewie for short), a 10-month-old, five-pound bundle of nerves when Boucher rescued him from San Francisco's Animal Care and Control during the fall. On their first meeting, Boucher spent over an hour trying to coax him to her so she could take him home—to no avail.

"Finally, I just threw a blanket on him and scooped him up and took him out of there," she said. "He was so afraid, but every day was a better day for him."

Boucher rescued Guthrie, an old blind German shepherd, over Thanksgiving weekend after a couple driving to the Bay Area found him on the side of Highway 5 near Santa Barbara and deposited him in a San Francisco shelter. At the time of the fire, Boucher had been actively trying



Cesar Perez, who found his family's pooch at Rocket Dog Rescue's "adoption stand" on 24th Street, extends sympathy and encouragement to founder Pali Boucher. Photo by Pomelo Gerard

to find his previous owners by contacting shelters and organizations in the Santa Barbara area.

The third dog killed in the fire was Daisy, a red-hued pit bull Boucher had rescued from Animal Care and Control just days beforehand. "She had been starved to the point of near death," Boucher said, remembering when she first met Daisy. "But she loved her crate, and she was just so happy to be safe."

For Boucher, whose journey from homeless drug addict to champion for animals has been chronicled by media outlets like Animal Planet and is slated to become the subject of a forthcoming film by documentary filmmaker Robert Epstein, the experience of losing animals she was trying to save cuts deeply.

"I've really devoted my life and given up a lot of things normal people have, like nice furniture and relationships, with the

understanding that it was all for the animals. For something like this to happen, I just feel like I failed."

Thousands Saved Since 2001

Though still battling sadness over the fire's havoc, Boucher takes solace in knowing that the organization she founded in 2001 has grown from a tiny, one-woman operation to a network of some 45 foster homes that have saved over 3,000 animals from death in shelters.

"I was so stricken with the grief and the loss of the animals...and the feeling of remembering that the animals died [in my house], but then I remembered that thousands of animals have been saved," she said.

Today, Boucher and her dogs Elwood, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Muddy Waters are living temporarily at Kositas Pet Grooming in Bernal Heights. Boucher is

uncertain whether she'll be able to return to her former home, but has not ruled out the possibility.

In the meantime, she and the dedicated volunteers who run Rocket Dog Rescue are getting on with the business of what they do best: saving animals. Since the fire, the organization has continued to rescue at-risk shelter dogs and place them into foster homes until they can be offered for adoption.

Boucher and her pals still sit in front of Zephyr Real Estate on 24th Street from noon to 4 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month (Feb. 3 this month), hoping to introduce their four-legged friends to sympathetic passersby. They also bring their dogs to the Castro BofA the third Sunday of the month.

And while Rocket Dog Rescue is helping dogs to find new homes, the organization itself is searching for a home for its Urban Sanctuary Project, which has been part of Rocket Dog Rescue's fundraising efforts since long before the fire. The goal? To purchase and convert a warehouse or other suitable space inside or outside city limits into a facility that would not only house rescued dogs until they could find new homes, but also serve as a community center and operational headquarters for the organization. That goal has become all the more important in recent weeks.

"My house has always been the safety net. My house was very actively rescue central. I was very lucky," Boucher said.

Slim's will hold a benefit for Rocket Dog Rescue on Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m., featuring Marga Gomez, among others. Another fundraising event is tentatively planned for March at Terra Mia Studio in Noe Valley. For more information about the events, donations, adoptions, and the Urban Sanctuary Project, contact Rocket Dog Rescue at 415-642-4786 or visit www.rocketdogrescue.com.

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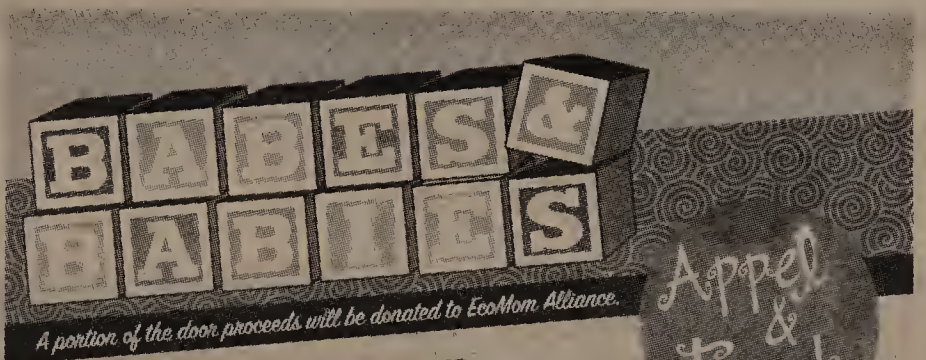
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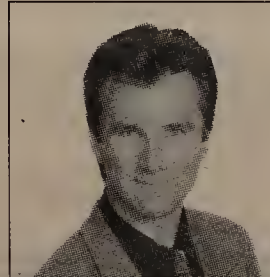
If they don't, they may very soon. And the implications could be enormous. If you're in your 50's or beyond, chances are your real estate needs are changing. You may be looking to downsize, thinking of placing your house in a trust, wondering how your real estate figures into your overall retirement planning, or dealing with whether an aging parent can stay at home. You might also be interested to learn about special real estate tax advantages the law makes available to those ages 55 and up.

Whatever your concern, I can help. I'm a certified Seniors Real Estate Specialist and Realtor with Zephyr Real Estate. I'm also a Noe Valley resident who has been involved in the Bay Area's fiduciary community as a trusted resource for over a decade.

Please feel free to give me a call to discuss any questions you might have about any of the above topics, or about real estate in San Francisco more generally. If I can't help you directly, I'll be able to connect you with the appropriate resource to address your concern. There's no more important time to begin planning for the future than NOW!



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The Cost of Living in Noe

Subprime Gloom Reaches Noe

By Corrie M. Anders

The real estate malaise that has festered throughout much of the nation spread to seemingly immune Noe Valley in November and December, as the volume of home sales dropped to its lowest level in nearly a decade.

Buyers purchased only 11 single-family detached homes during the last two months of 2007—a decline of more than 40 percent from the 19 residential properties sold during the same period the previous year.

The data, which Zephyr Real Estate's 24th Street office provides monthly to the *Voice*, showed that condominium sales suffered a comparable falloff at the end of last year. Nine condos changed hands during November and December, a 44 percent drop from the 16 sales recorded in the same two-month period of 2006.

"The buyers and sellers took their winter vacation this year," said Randall Kostick, Zephyr's general sales manager. "It's the first time in a long time that we've seen a noticeable seasonal slowdown."

In addition, the shock waves from last spring's subprime mortgage industry col-

Noe Valley Home Sales*						
Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price As % of List Price
Single-family homes						
Dec. 2007	4	\$1,450,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,536,500	35	103%
Nov. 2007	7	\$900,000	\$2,350,000	\$1,572,157	42	99%
Dec. 2006	8	\$1,000,000	\$2,125,000	\$1,477,813	48	99%
Nov. 2006	11	\$870,000	\$2,900,000	\$1,495,455	33	100%
Condominiums						
Dec. 2007	4	\$725,000	\$1,150,000	\$974,500	38	100%
Nov. 2007	5	\$642,500	\$1,987,500	\$1,100,900	32	106%
Dec. 2006	6	\$397,000	\$1,688,000	\$889,250	54	102%
Nov. 2006	10	\$695,000	\$1,510,000	\$1,051,000	38	102%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
Dec. 2007	4	\$899,900	\$1,501,000	\$1,239,275	39	99%
Nov. 2007	4	\$899,000	\$2,350,000	\$1,437,250	29	95%
Dec. 2006	4	\$1,075,000	\$1,775,000	\$1,333,750	53	99%
Nov. 2006	9	\$925,000	\$2,685,000	\$1,414,731	65	99%
5+-unit buildings						
Dec. 2007	0	—	—	—	—	—
Nov. 2007	0	—	—	—	—	—
Dec. 2006	0	—	—	—	—	—
Nov. 2006	1	\$1,565,000	\$1,565,000	\$1,565,000	82	95%

* Sales figures include all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. In this survey, Noe Valley is defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Voice* thanks Zephyr Real Estate (www.zephyrsf.com) for supplying the sales data.

NTV 2/08

lapse finally reached the neighborhood.

The constant news "about the mortgage crisis around the rest of the country" undermined local confidence, Kostick said, and gave "pause to buyers." Economic uncertainty also made sellers think twice about putting their houses on the market, he said, "because they were not confident they were going to get the prices they wanted."

Despite the faltering pace of sales, Noe Valley homes sold for an average of \$1.5 million in November and December, about \$60,000 more per house than a year ago. Also, the 11 homes—especially the more desirable properties—sold close to the asking price or higher.

The highest-priced house sold in December (for \$1.7 million) was a 2,100-square-foot property located in the 4200 block of 24th Street, between Diamond and Douglass streets. The three-bedroom, two-bath house was snapped up in six days.

Kostick noted, however, that a few homes tended to languish in the changing marketplace. In those cases, owners were

forced to adjust their prices.

A beautiful yellow Victorian on 24th Street next door to Barney's Restaurant had an initial asking price of \$3,495,000. After 110 days on the market, the property sold in November for \$2,350,000, over a million less than the original price. Still, the home, which has four bedrooms, two baths, and almost 3,000 square feet of space, tied for the most expensive residential building sold in Noe Valley in November–December combined.

Angela Lam, a real estate agent with

Pacific Union, agrees home shoppers have become more cautious. "I think a lot of buyers out there are waiting to see if the prices will be getting lower," she said.

Last summer, two newly constructed homes hit the market at the corner of Valley and Castro streets—and Lam listed one at \$2,485,000 and a second, smaller one at \$1,950,000.

The more expensive property didn't attract any significant attention until the asking price was slashed \$590,000 to \$1,895,000, she said. It sold recently for an undisclosed price.

"When we got down to below the \$2 million mark, we had a lot of interest," Lam said.

The second property went into escrow in December after the asking price was dropped \$200,000 to \$1,750,000.

Rents Steadily Increasing

Though home prices may be facing a "correction," rents in Noe Valley are still heading skyward.

A survey of rentals listed last month on Craigslist showed that property owners in the neighborhood were asking an average of \$4,088 for a three-bedroom rental. That's 24.9 percent higher than landlords sought for a similar size unit in January of 2006.

The average for a two-bedroom rental was \$2,809, or 12.8 percent above the \$2,491 asking rents of one year earlier. Prices rose 7.2 percent for one-bedroom units, to \$1,865 from \$1,740.

Local experts attribute the rent increases to supply and demand—lots of people can't afford to buy a home in San Francisco these days, so renting is the only alternative. Also, potential homebuyers are staying put in their apartments while they wait for an end to the subprime mortgage meltdown.

Total Single-Family Home Sales in Noe Valley in November–December

2007	11
2006	19
2005	32
2004	19
2003	26
2002	29
2001	33
2000	18

Source: Zephyr Real Estate, *Voice* Archives (www.noevalleyvoice.com).

A Snapshot of Noe Valley Rents**

Type of Unit	Number in Sample	Range of Rents Dec-Jan 2008	Average Dec-Jan 2008	Average Dec-Jan 2007
Studio	6	\$ 825 – \$1,975	\$1,375 / mo.	\$1,175 / mo.
1-bedroom	14	\$1,300 – \$2,295	\$1,865 / mo.	\$1,740 / mo.
2-bedroom	26	\$1,795 – \$4,850	\$2,809 / mo.	\$2,491 / mo.
3-bedroom	10	\$2,700 – \$5,500	\$4,088 / mo.	\$3,274 / mo.
4+-bedroom	7	\$4,250 – \$9,000	\$7,106 / mo.	\$7,034 / mo.

** Survey based on a sample of 63 Noe Valley listings appearing on Craigslist from Dec. 27 to Jan. 17, 2008.

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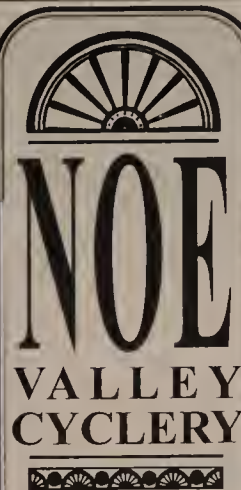
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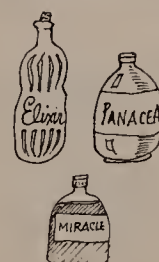
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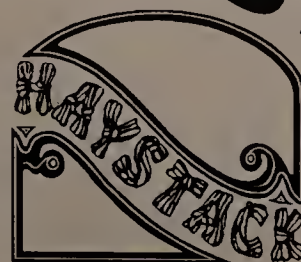
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CRIME BEAT

By Officer Jane Warner
San Francisco Patrol Special Police

The following crime summaries were culled from reports filed at Mission Police Station. They cover some but not all incidents occurring in Noe Valley from Dec. 2, 2007, to Jan. 11, 2008. "Noe Valley," in this instance, is the area bounded by Grand View, 20th, Guerrero, and Cesar Chavez streets. Next month's crime log also will include incidents south of Cesar Chavez to 30th Street.

Burglary: 4000 block of 26th Street, 12-2-07, 6:30 a.m.

A resident woke up to find that his garage had been burglarized. Missing were two iPods, a digital camera, a woman's purse, and a pair of prescription eyeglasses. The resident also found that someone had been inside the car parked in front of his house. He discovered the glove box inside the car had been pried open and an electric garage door-opener had been taken. The man told responding police that his family was sleeping upstairs above the garage but it did not appear that the suspect had attempted to enter the home. Officers processed the scene and took a report.

Robbery with Gun: 1200 block of Guerrero Street, 12-2-07, 7:03 p.m.

While straightening the clothes rack at a vintage clothing store at Guerrero and 24th streets, a clerk thought she heard someone standing behind her. As she turned to see who was there, she saw a man in a gray hooded sweatshirt pointing a gun at her. "Don't look at me," the robber ordered. "Give me everything." Fearing for her life, the woman went to the cash register and took \$500 from the till, while the suspect continued to point the gun at her head. The suspect grabbed the cash and told the clerk to go to the back of the room. He then fled the store in an unknown direction. The clerk escaped out the back door and went to a neighboring house, where she called police. The suspect was described as a white male, 40 to 50 years old, 5'9", 160 pounds, with missing front teeth.

Trespassing: 1300 block of Castro Street, 12-7-07, 3:50 p.m.

A teenager walked into a drugstore at Castro and Jersey streets and grabbed a handful of candy bars. The young man then approached a customer and asked if he would pay for the candy bars. The customer declined and reported the incident to a clerk, who approached the teen and asked him to leave. "I didn't do anything," the young man complained. "Why I got to leave?" The clerk ex-

plained that he could not solicit customers and again asked the trespasser to leave, but the teen refused and stood in the middle of the doorway blocking the path of other customers. "I'm not leaving, and you can't make me." The clerk then called 911 and tried to take the suspect's photo with a store camera. The teen blocked the camera with his hand and left the store. He was last seen walking northbound on Castro toward 24th Street. Police responded and took a report for documentation.

Vandalism to Bus Shelter: 25th and Castro, 12-11-07, 6:09 p.m.

While patrolling the parking lot of James Lick Middle School, a campus control officer heard glass shattering. When he looked in the direction of the noise, he saw four teenagers—two girls and two boys, approximately 12 to 14 years old—running from a bus shelter. The campus officer saw that one of the shelter's glass panes was shattered and its shards of glass scattered on the sidewalk below. As the group ran, one of the vandals stopped, went back, picked up an object, and broke the other pane on the bus shelter. The young teen then caught up to the group, last seen running north on Castro toward 24th Street. Police responded to the area, notified the Department of Public Works for cleanup, and called Muni to report the damaged shelter.

Burglary: 4000 block of 24th Street, 12-13-07, 4:13 a.m.

Police responded to an audible alarm at an electronics store on 24th Street. When they arrived, they saw that the front gate had been slid open and the deadbolt to the front door unlocked. Officers conducted a walk-through of the store and observed that several pieces of merchandise had been knocked over and were lying on the floor. The back door was open and there were lights on in a storage room. The store manager arrived and observed that two LCD TVs, valued at over \$700 each, were missing. Officers took photos of the scene and referred the case to CSI for follow-up. There are no known suspects.

Attempted Robbery: 24th and Church, 1-1-08, 1:38 a.m.

A man was standing on the corner when another man riding a bicycle approached him and said, "You think you're black with those gold teeth? Empty out your pockets." Fearing for his safety, the man punched the man riding the bicycle in the head and then started to run. The suspect gave chase on the bicycle, gaining ground on the victim as he rode behind. To escape, the man jumped a fence and ran through a residential back yard yelling that he was being chased. He then jumped a wall and climbed up on to a deck and entered the back of a house. The owner of the house started to scream seeing a strange man enter her house. Seeing the commotion, a neighbor

responded and tackled the man, holding him down until police arrived. Officers took the man to Mission Station, where they sorted out the facts and released him without charge. Officers filed an attempted robbery report on behalf of the man and issued him a case number.

Auto Burglary: 22nd and Dolores, 1-1-08, 6 p.m.

After parking his truck overnight on the corner of 22nd and Dolores, a man returned the next day to discover that the driver-side door lock had been jimmied and several items had been taken from inside the cab. Taken during the auto break-in was the man's shoulder bag, which contained his Air Force identification card; two pairs of sunglasses; and various construction tools. Also taken was a laptop belonging to the U.S. Air Force. The man called the police, filed a report, and notified his command of the break-in. There are no known suspects.

Reported Burglary, 900 block of Church Street, 1-2-08, 11:24 a.m.

A couple who were away on vacation had a friend watch their house for them while they were away. The friend came over one morning and discovered that a chunk of wood had been chipped off a windowsill, causing her to suspect that someone had stepped on the windowsill and broken it with their weight. The friend checked the rest of the house and found nothing amiss. She called police and filed a report, and also advised the neighbors to be on the lookout.

Stolen Auto: 4000 block of 25th Street, 1-6-08, 6:50 p.m.

A woman reported to police that she walked out of the door of her house and saw a man driving away in her green Honda Civic. The woman described the suspect as a short white male wearing a blue baseball cap. Officers filed a report and advised the woman to contact her insurance company.

Robbery, 27th and Dolores, 1-11-08, 7 p.m.

A woman walking on Dolores Street with her shoulder purse strapped around her arm, noticed that a gray four-door sedan was following slowly behind her. Suddenly, a man

jumped out of the vehicle, ran up behind her, and grabbed her shoulder bag, knocking her to the ground. The woman fought back, but feared that the culprit might have a weapon and let go of the bag. The robber grabbed the bag, which contained a cell phone, a pair of gloves, various credit cards and identification, but no cash. He then got back into the car, driven by another man, and sped off northbound on Dolores. The woman, who was unhurt during the attack, walked to Mission Station and reported the incident.

Patrol Special Officer Jane Warner walks a regular beat in Noe Valley. You can reach her by sending an email to sfpatrol@earthlink.net or calling 559-9955.

The SFPD Divides Noe in Half

Noe Valley falls under the jurisdiction of two San Francisco police districts: Mission and Ingleside. Mission Police Station covers the northern half of the neighborhood, including 24th Street, and Ingleside the southern half, starting at Cesar Chavez Street.

Both districts hold monthly meetings that are open to the public. Mission Police District's community meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month, at 6 p.m., at Mission Station, 630 Valencia Street near 17th Street. Ingleside's community meetings take place on the third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., at Ingleside Police Station off Balboa Park at San Jose Avenue.

To speak to an officer at Mission Station, call 558-5400 or e-mail SFPDMissionStation@ci.sf.ca.us. The station's tip line for anonymous reporting of drug or gang activity is 392-2623. To contact Ingleside, call 404-4000 or e-mail SFPDInglesideStation@ci.sf.ca.us. The Ingleside anonymous tip line is 575-4444. For citywide online reporting, go to www.sfgov.org/sitelpolice.

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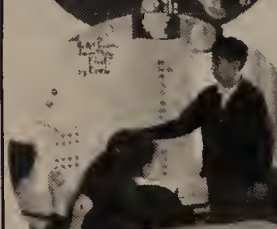
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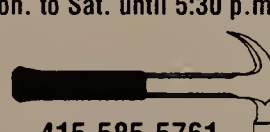
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SHORT TAKES

Two Parks Celebrate Renovations

Everyone is invited to Dolores Park on Saturday, Feb. 2, from 11 a.m. until noon, for an "I Love My Playground" Valentine party. The Friends of Dolores Park Playground has partnered with the Neighborhood Parks Council to host the event, which will celebrate a boost in funding for renovation of the playground, at Dolores and 19th streets. "We want to create a world-class playground at Dolores Park," said Nancy Gonzalez Madynski, a spokesperson for Friends.

To get people into the swing of things, the Alphabet Rockers—a band that "mixes cool with school"—will perform songs from its debut CD *Alphabet Rockers*. Refreshments and valentines will be shared, and Supervisors Bevan Dufty and Ross Mirkarimi will be on hand to applaud the grassroots effort. Mayor Gavin Newsom has been invited, too.

For more information about the Friends of Dolores Park Playground, visit www.friendsofdolorespark.org.

If you miss that celebration, your next park date will be the Feb. 9 dedication of the new children's playground at Noe Courts park on the corner of 24th and Douglass streets. Kids can try out colorful new play structures and swingsets in a freshly surfaced park, courtesy of a fundraising campaign launched more than three years ago by Friends of Noe Courts Playground. Festivities, which were still being arranged when the *Voice* went to press, will kick off at 11 a.m. To find out the particulars, email Laura Norman of FNCP at lauranor@yahoo.com.

The Story of a Pig in Love

Noe Valley resident Maria van Lieshout has published a children's book, *Bloom! A Little Book About Finding Love*—starring a pig who falls in love—just in time for Valentine's Day. Bloom's publication marks van Lieshout's debut as an author/illustrator, though she has previously illustrated two books published in her native Holland and one for a Canadian publisher.

The book's story and pictures have already won acclaim: Images from *Bloom* were selected by the Society of Illustrators for its 49th Annual Exhibition in the Museum of American Illustration in New York and for publication in its spring 2008 annual. *Publisher's Weekly* praised the book in a starred review in the magazine's December 2007 issue.



This month, van Lieshout will celebrate the local launch of her book with a Valentine's book party at Cover to Cover Booksellers, Castro Street near 24th Street, on Thursday, Feb. 7, from 5 to 7 p.m. The author will read from *Bloom*, create some drawings, and sign copies of the book. To find out more about *Bloom*, visit www.bloomloves.com.

Ministry Hosts Bluegrass Stars

The Noe Valley Ministry is host to three of the 30 shows scheduled for the ninth annual San Francisco Bluegrass and Old-Time Festival, which runs through Saturday, Feb. 9. A total of 57 bands will perform at 17 Bay Area venues, including nearby Cafe du Nord, the Make-Out Room, 12 Galaxies, and the Atlas Café. This year, the nonprofit, all-volunteer-run festival includes a two-day bluegrass and

old-time film festival at the Red Vic Movie House, 1727 Haight Street between Cole and Shrader streets, and a full day of workshops.

The performances at the Ministry, 1021 Sanchez Street between Elizabeth and 23rd streets, feature some of the festival's most prominent acts. On Saturday, Feb. 2, the Crooked Jades, Stairwell Sisters, and the Spring Creek Bluegrass Band will perform together. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$22 at the door. Then on Friday, Feb. 8, catch Jackstraw, Fret Not, and the Wranglers for \$18 in advance or \$20 at the door.

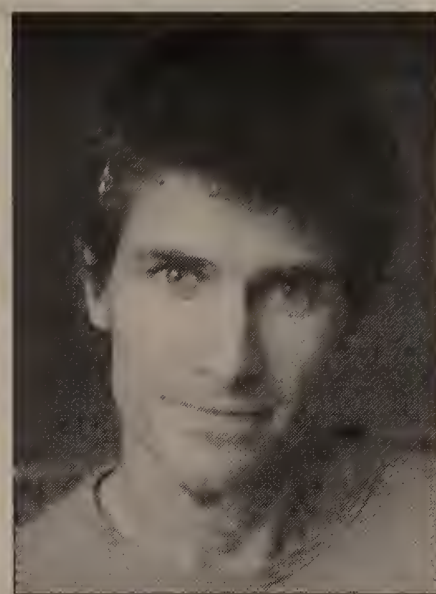
On the final day of the fest, Saturday, Feb. 9, Peter Rowan will perform with Eric and Suzy Thompson; tickets are \$23 in advance or \$25 at the door. All Ministry shows are at 7:30 p.m.; doors open at 7 p.m. For more information about the festival or for advance tickets, visit www.sfbbluegrass.org. Advance tickets are also available in person at Streetlight Records, 3979 24th St.; 282-3550.

A Yogi Who Makes House Calls

Noe Valley yoga teacher Brick Thornton has developed a new twist on an ancient art: personalized yoga lessons at home.

Thornton, who lives on 25th Street but spent four years studying and teaching yoga in India, hopes his approach to yoga will make it accessible to more people. "Too many people are beginning to believe that only the super-fit and hyper-flexible can enjoy yoga's benefits," he says. "[But] yoga was never meant to be exclusive."

When he makes a home visit, he says, he first assesses his client's goals and physical condition. Then, with the client's help, he develops a specially tailored program of yoga stretches and meditation. "A practice is designed for you from the ground up," he says.



Brick Thornton of 25th Street has recently begun to offer yoga instruction to clients in their homes.
Photo by Erica Mueller

Not only does Thornton provide private yoga instruction, he also teaches doctors and outpatients at Kaiser Permanente. For more details about his in-home yoga service, visit www.yogayana.com.

Money for Collaborative Artists

More than \$650,000 is available from the Creative Work Fund to support literary and performing artists working in collaboration with nonprofit groups. Grants of \$10,000 to \$40,000 will be awarded in September 2008 to artists living in Alameda, Contra Costa, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, or Sonoma County. The directors of the Creative Work Fund are looking for proposals in which artists plan to create new art and work actively with a nonprofit to engage members of the community.

To participate in the selection process, artists and their collaborating nonprofits

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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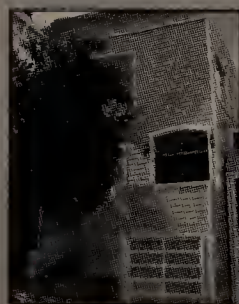


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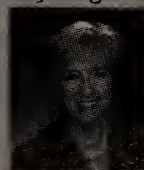


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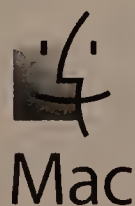
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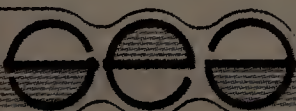
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SHORT TAKES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

must submit three-page letters of inquiry by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5. Letters of inquiry should go to the Creative Work Fund, One Lombard Street, Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94111.

Detailed information about the application process is available online at www.creativeworkfund.org.

Protect Those Picassos

If you've run out of space on the refrigerator for your kids' artwork, don't despair. Debbie Symanovich, who lives on Worth Street near Alvarado School, has created a way to preserve the piles of art children bring home. Through her home business called HeartBound, she makes heirloom-quality hardcover books of children's art. Typically, the books have 20 pieces of art, which are reproduced using archival inks and acid-free materials.

Symanovich, who launched HeartBound in 2005, has recently added new products, including a coffee-table book, note cards, prints, and clipboards. To find out more, visit her web site at www.heartbound.net, email debbie@heartbound.net, or call 415-695-0274.

Music Series Plays Heartstrings

The Noe Valley Chamber Music Series presents a special Valentine's performance this month featuring the vocal group San Francisco Renaissance Voices and lute performer Scott Shubeck. The troupe will perform a "Feast for St. Valentine" on Sunday, Feb. 10, at 4 p.m. First,

the audience will witness a trial in the Renaissance Court of Love, complete with troubadour songs, *airs de coeur*, and music for the lute. After the judge renders her verdict, celebrate with the group's performance of Orlando di Lasso's tongue-in-cheek mass *Missa super Mon Coeur se recommande à vous* (My Heart Is Offered Still to You).

A few weeks later, on Sunday, March 2, cellist Jennifer Culp and pianist Betty Woo will perform the Strauss Sonata in F major, Op. 6, and the Rachmaninoff Sonata in g minor, Op. 19. If the ink is dry, they'll also perform a new piece written especially for them.

All Chamber Music Series concerts are held at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez Street at 23rd Street. General admission tickets are \$18. More information, including the rest of the spring 2008 concert lineup, can be found at www.nvcm.org.

Photographer Focuses the Mind

Neighborhood psychiatrist and photographer Robert Root, who has lived in Noe Valley for 12 years, recently published a book of his photographs. *Image in Mind: Perspectives on Culture, Landscape, and the Photographic Relationship* includes 74 color images from Root's travels across several continents.

Although Root trained for the practice of psychiatry at Yale Medical School, as a photographer, he says, "I am essentially self-taught and have considered myself a photographer for about 20-plus years." Photographers and psychiatrists, he believes, share a certain sensibility.

In *Image in Mind*, he explains, "By observing with an open mind, and paying attention to the feelings elicited by these images, we learn more about humanity and suffering."

The book is available at Cover to Cover



Booksellers on Castro Street and Phoenix Books on 24th Street.

Poetry Book Launch for Janell Moon

Local poet Janell Moon, whose office is on 23rd Street, is publishing her 10th book this month, a volume of poetry titled *Riding Free in a New Studebaker*. According to Moon, this is the book "I was meant to write."

Moon will appear at the Radar Reading Series, hosted by Michelle Tea, on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 6 p.m. sharp at the San Francisco Public Library's main branch, 100 Larkin Street at Grove Street. She'll read again with Leslie Kirk Campbell at the San Francisco Center for the Book, 300 DeHaro Street at 16th Street, on Friday, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m. A free broadside of a poem will be available there.

If you miss her at those readings, be

sure to catch Moon on Monday, March 3, at 7 p.m. in the Gallery Café at the All Poets Welcome Reading Series, 1200 Mason Street at Washington Street in San Francisco.

Play Explores Love and War

Come Home, a solo play about 26 black soldiers who leave their home in rural Arkansas to fight against Germany in World War II, is making its world premiere this month on the main stage at the Marsh. In the new work, playwright Jovelyn Richards explores how war and violence change the soldiers who fight and the families who wait for them back home. Her heroine is Donna Ray, a joyful young bride as the play opens, a resilient Mrs. D at its close. Performances are scheduled Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m., Jan. 31 through March 8. Tickets are available on a sliding scale, \$18 to \$35 each. For tickets, call 800-838-3006 or visit www.themarsh.org.



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NOE VALLEY \$1,395,000

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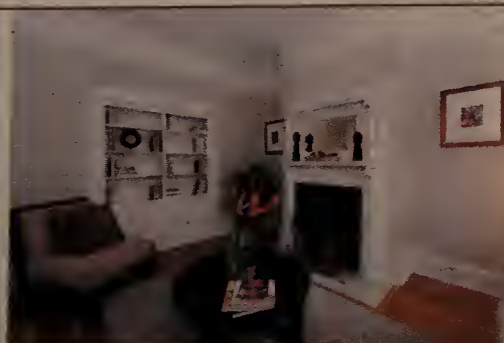
TWIN PEAKS \$1,349,000

New construction, great middle unit condo w/views. 3BR/2BA, eat-in kit/family rm, office, 3 frlcs, skylights, elevator, pkg & decks. Brazilian teak hrdwd flrs, hi-end appliances, & designer touches.



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FEBRUARY 2008

Feb. 1 & 2: The California Music Educators' Association JAZZ FESTIVAL features groups from the entire Bay Area. 8 am-5 pm. SF School of the Arts, 555 Portola. 695-5720; www.sfsota-pta.org.

Feb. 1-3: TAKAMI & MoBu Dance Group present a dance performance, *Illusion 2*. Fri. & Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 7 pm. SomArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan. 864-4126; www.mobudancestudio.com.

Feb. 1, 8, 22 & 29: City College Older Adults Program sponsors a tree discussion series on ARTHRITIS. 9:30 am-noon. The Sequoias, 1501 Post. 551-1122.

Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29: Friday BINGO at St. Paul's begins at 7 pm (doors open at 5 pm). Parish Hall, 221 Valley. 648-7538.

Feb. 1-16: Sharon Eberhardt's play *Save Arts* is based on the true story of an Indian WITCHCRAFT TRIAL in the 1930s. Fri. & Sat., 8 pm. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia. 1-800-838-3006; www.themarsh.org.

Feb. 1-27: CREATIVITY EXPLORED hosts a group exhibition of sculptural found objects, "Finders Keepers." Mon.-Fri., 10 am-3 pm; Sat., 1-6 pm. 3245 16th. 863-2108; www.creativityexplored.org.

Feb. 1-29: Noe Valley SENIOR CENTER serves hot lunches for people over 60, weekdays at 12:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 648-1030.

Feb. 1-29: OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS meets Mon.-Sat., 7-8 am. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Feb. 1-March 1: A GROUP SHOW at City Art Cooperative Gallery has an artists' reception Feb. 1, from 7 to 10 pm. Wed.-Sun., noon-9 pm. 828 Valencia. 970-9900; www.cityartgallery.org.

Feb. 1-March 8: *Come Home*, Jovelyn Richards' solo play about black soldiers and their families during World War II, premieres at the Marsh. Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm. 1062 Valencia. 1-800-838-3006; www.themarsh.org.

Feb. 2: The Swinging GUITARS of Tom Huber and Misisipi Mike (8:30 am) and Failure to Disperse (10:30 am) play the Noe Valley Farmers' Market. 24th & Vicksburg. 248-1332; www.noevalleyfarmers-market.com.

Feb. 2: The Noe Valley Ministry sponsors "Writing the Sacred," a WORKSHOP looking at the poetic elements of the Bible's Psalms and offering a chance to write your own sacred poem. 10 am-12:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Feb. 2: The 10th annual Lunar New Year FLOWER MARKET at Strybing Arboretum features performances by Lion Dancers and Chinese acrobats. 10 am-3 pm. Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue & Lincoln. 661-1316; www.sfbotanicalgarden.org.

Feb. 2: The band Alphabet Rockers performs at the "I Love My Playground" event celebrating DOLORES PARK Playground. 11 am-noon. 19th & Dolores. 828-5772; www.friendsdolorespark.org.

Feb. 2: The Noe Valley Music Series hosts the SF BLUEGRASS & Old-Time Music Festival, with performances by the Stairwell Sisters, the Crooked Jades, and Spring Creek. 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Feb. 2: DICK CHENEY (performed by Ed Holmes of the SF Mime Troupe) delivers the monthly Soap Box Lecture. 10-10:30 pm. Bernal Bubbles, 397 Cortland. 821-9530; www.bernalbubbles.com.

Feb. 3: Rocket DOG RESCUE shows off adoptable dogs in front of Zephyr Real Estate. Noon-4 pm. 4040 24th. 642-4786.

Feb. 3: St. Paul's hosts a SUPER BOWL PARTY with refreshments from 2 to 8 pm. Farana Hall, 221 Valley. 648-7538.

Feb. 4-27: SF Library's BOOKMOBILE parks in Noe Valley on Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 am-1 pm. 665 Elizabeth. 557-4353.

Feb. 4-28: The Mission Branch Library offers HOMEWORK HELP for kids in grades K-7 Monday through Thursday (except Feb. 18), 4-6 pm. 300 Bartlett at 24th. 355-2800; www.slpl.org.

Feb. 5: The California PRIMARY ELECTION! Polls are open 7 am to 8 pm. For more information: 1-800-345-VOTE.

Feb. 5: The SPCA's PET LOSS support group is moderated by Dr. Betty Carmack. 7:30-9 pm. 243 Alabama. 554-3050.

Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26: LANGO holds a "Tot/Parent Spanish" class at 10 am. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317; www.langkids.com.

Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26: Chris Sequeira gives a beginners TAI CHI class at 6 pm on Tuesdays. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Call to register: 773-8185 or 650-756-6857.

Feb. 5, 12, 19 & 26: The Kadampa Buddhist Temple holds an introduction to MEDITATION on Tuesdays. 7-8:30 pm. 3324 17th. 503-1187.

Feb. 5, 19 & 26: The Noe Valley Library sponsors LAPSITS for babies and toddlers at 10:15 am, and preschool STORY TIME at 11 am. Bethany UMC, 1268 Sanchez. 647-8393; www.slpl.org.

Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27: Danielle is the STORYTELLER (with help from her new baby, Charlotte) at Cover to Cover's Wednesday story hour. 3-4 pm. 1307 Castro. 282-8080.

Feb. 6: Seven authors—Anna Furtado, Gabrielle Goldsby, Karin Kallmaker, JLee Meyer, Ursula Steck, and Diane and Jack Anderson-Minshall—appear at the Lesbian Genre Fiction TOUR at the Main Library. 6-7:45 pm. 100 Larkin. 557-4400; www.slpl.org.

Feb. 7: Local author/illustrator Maria Van Lieshout introduces her children's book *Bloom!* at Cover to Cover. 5 pm. 1307 Castro. 282-8080.

Feb. 7: Artists' Television Access screens *Moments with Fidel*, a 2004 DOCUMENTARY about the Cuban leader's life. 7:30-9 pm. 992 Valencia. 824-3890.

Feb. 7, 14, 21 & 28: Meet at Holey Bagel for a Thursday STROLLER WALK. 11 am. 3872 24th. www.noestrolls.com.

Feb. 7-March 2: Theater Rhinoceros presents the Mamet PLAY *Boston Marriage*. Wed.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 3 pm; Feb. 10, 7 pm. 2926 16th. 861-5079.

Feb. 8: "NUDES," a group exhibit at Rozanoff Art, features work by Marlene Aron, Anna Efanova, Giovanna Giordano, Igor Koutsenko, Jakob Kalousek, Crystal Morey, and Thorina Rose. Reception 6-9 pm. 355 29th. 917-251-3179; www.rozanoffart.com.

Feb. 8: The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's "LOVE on Wheels" is a dating game for two-wheelers. 6-10 pm. Rickshaw Stop, 155 Fell. 431-BIKE; www.sfbike.org.

Feb. 8: Jackstraw, the Wranglers, and Fretnot perform at the SF BLUEGRASS & Old-Time Music Festival. 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Feb. 8: ELBO ROOM hosts a Free Funk Friday benefit for the International Dyslexia Association. 10 pm-2 am. 647 Valencia. 552-7788; www.elbo.com.

Feb. 9: The Noe Valley Farmers' Market hosts MUSIC by Jude (8:30 am) and They Call Me Lucky (10:30 am). 24th & Vicksburg. 248-1332; www.noevalleyfarmers-market.com.

Feb. 9: Dr. Pat Zrelak discusses the recognition and prevention of STROKES at the Older Women's League (OWL) meeting. 10 am. 870 Market, Room 1185. 989-4422.

Feb. 9: Garden for the Environment and Orchard Keepers conduct a workshop in basic FRUIT TREE CARE. 10 am-1 pm. 7th Ave. at Lawton. Preregister 731-5627; info@gardenfortheenvironment.org.

Feb. 9: The neighborhood is invited to play and do Valentine crafts at the DEDICATION of the new kids' playground at Noe Courts. 11 am. 24th & Douglass. Friends of Noe Courts Playground, lauranor@yahoo.com.

Feb. 9: The Glen Park Library hosts a VALENTINE CRAFTS workshop for ages 5 to 12. 3-4 pm. 2825 Diamond. Register at 337-4740.

Feb. 7: JEFF KINNEY signs his book *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*. 11 am-1 pm. Cover to Cover. 1307 Castro. 282-8080.

Feb. 9: Glen Park couple Jeanne Halpern and Louis Prisco lead a Valentine LOVERS' Hike and potluck lunch on Mount Tam. Bring a dish for six, plus snacks and water. Meet at 9:15 am at the California Alpine Club, 730 Panoramic Hwy, near Mountain Home Inn. 841-1254.

Feb. 9: Noe Valley Pet Co. hosts a GRATEFUL DOGS Rescue Adoption Fair noon to 3 pm. 1451 Church. 282-7385.

Feb. 9: PETER ROWAN Bluegrass Band and Eric & Suzy Thompson till the SF Bluegrass Fest stage, starting at 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Feb. 9-10 & 14-16: WOO AT THE ZOO is an adults-only humorous discussion of animal reproductive rituals, led by former penguin keeper Jane Tollini. 6 pm; Feb. 10 & 16 at noon. SF Zoo, Sloat near the Great Highway. Reservations required: 753-7236; www.sfzoo.org.

Feb. 10: A microchipping CLINIC at Animal Care & Control is free for pets of SF residents. 1-4 pm. 1200 15th. 554-6364.

Feb. 10: Emerging CHOREOGRAPHERS from Dancers' Group and CounterPULSE share their work. Free. 2 pm. 1310 Mission. 626-2060; www.counterpulse.org.

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CALENDAR

Feb. 10: Brett Webb-Mitchell discusses his book *On Being a GAY PARENT* at the PFLAG support group meeting. 2-4 pm. St. Francis Lutheran Church, 152 Church. 921-8850; www.pflagst.org.

Feb. 10: San Francisco Renaissance Voices and lute player Scott Shubeck perform a musical Feast for St. Valentine at Noe Valley CHAMBER MUSIC. 4 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. www.nvcm.org.

Feb. 10, 17 & 24: Learn to KNIT SOCKS on two circular needles in a class at Noe Knit. 2-3:30 pm. 3957 24th. 970-9750.

Feb. 11: New College's School of Law offers a free WORKSHOP, "How to Present a Case in Small Claims Court." 6 pm. 50 Fell. 241-1300.

Feb. 11: Teacher Rhoda Curtis reads from her memoir *Her First Ninety Years*, at the ODD MONDAYS series. 7 pm, preceded by no-host dinner at Noe Valley Pizza, 5:30 pm (rsvp jlsender@webtv.net). 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Feb. 12: The SF Zoo's SENIOR STRDLL is a docent-guided walking tour on the second Tuesday of every month. 9-10:15 am. 1 Zoo Road (off Sloat near the Great Highway). 753-7173.

Feb. 12: San Francisco Atheists celebrate DARWIN DAY with a lecture/discussion about the science of evolution. 5-8 pm. Main Library, Latino/Hispanic Room, 100 Larkin. 557-4400.

Feb. 12: Filmmaker Sarah Feinbloom debuts *In Search of the Heart of Chocolate*, a "chocumentary" featuring the Noe Valley shop CHOCOLATE Covered. 6:30 & 7:30 pm, followed by a chocolate reception. Delancey Street, 600 Embarcadero. 512-5179; www.chocumentary.com.

Feb. 12: *Toe to Toe: The Rematch* pits dancers against athletes in a benefit for ODC DANCE Commons and Cal Athletics. 6:30 pm. Concourse, 635 8th. 352-7299; www.odcdance.org/toetotoe.

Feb. 13: New College of California hosts a Law School OPEN HOUSE. 6 pm. 50 Fell, Room 210. 241-1300.

Feb. 13: James Lick Middle School kids show off experiments at a SCIENCE FAIR. 6 pm. 1220 Noe. 695-5675.

Feb. 13: The Main Library's RAOAR READING series, hosted by Michelle Tea, features Pagan Kennedy, Janell Moon, Raz Link, and Joe Loya. 6-7:30 pm. Latino/Hispanic Room, 100 Larkin. 557-4400.

Feb. 13: Susie Bright introduces *The Best American EROTICA 2008*. 7:30 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia. 282-9246; www.mtbs.com.

Feb. 15: The Older Women's League (OWL) BOOK GROUP features *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. Noon-2 pm. 870 Market, room 911. 989-4422.

Feb. 15: In celebration of BLACK HISTORY MONTH, the Freedom Socialist Party screens a documentary film about James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket*. 7:30 pm. New Valencia Hall, 625 Larkin. 864-1278.

Feb. 15: SF Bachelors 'n' Bachelorettes holds a beginners SQUARE DANCE class on Fridays, 7:30-8:45 pm. First two sessions are free. Christ Church Lutheran, 20th Ave. & Quintara. Saul, 647-2483.

Feb. 15 & 16: The SF School of the Arts THEATER Dept. presents *Break a Leg: Senior Recital*. Three different performances: Fri., 4:30 pm & 7:30 pm; Sat., 7:30 pm. 555 Portola. 695-5720.

Feb. 15-17: Performance artist PENNY ARCADE performs. Fri. & Sat., 10:30 pm; Sun., 3 & 8 pm. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia. 826-5750; www.themarsh.org.

Feb. 16: The Faux Brummels (8:30 am) and Folk This! (10:30 am) perform at the Noe Valley Farmers' Market. 24th & Vicksburg. 248-1332; www.noevalleyfarmers-market.com.

Feb. 17: A BOOK RELEASE PARTY for poet Q.R. Hand's *Whose Really Blues* begins at 4:30 pm. Bird & Beckett, 653 Chenery. 586-3733.

Feb. 17: Clairdee and the Ken French Trio perform at a JAZZ VESPER. 5 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Feb. 19 & 20: Aileen Barr teaches a basic MOSAIC CLASS for adults at Terra Mia. 6-8 pm. 1314 Castro. Sign up at 642-9911.

Feb. 20: Attorney and former Olympic cyclist Bob Mionske discusses "Bicycling and the LAW" at the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. 6-8 pm. 995 Market. 431-BIKE; www.sfbike.org.

Feb. 20: Join Modern Times' Janice Flux at a party celebrating her new ZINE, *We Are Not the Moon*, illustrated by Annie Oanger. Bring a hardcover book to receive a free mag. 7 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia. 282-9246.

Feb. 20: Pollster David Binder discusses the prospects for a Democratic presidency at the Noe Valley OEMOCRATIC CLUB meeting. 7:30 pm. St. Philip's Church, 725 Diamond. 641-5838.

Feb. 21: St. Luke's Hospital holds a VOLUNTEER orientation the third Thursday of the month. 3-5 pm. 3555 Cesar Chavez. 641-6538; www.stlukes-sf.org.

Feb. 21: ANNA BANANA gives a free talk on "Surviving as an Artist." 7 pm. SF Center for the Book, 300 De Haro. 565-0545; www.sfcbook.org.

Feb. 21: Nancy DeStefanis gives a lecture/slide presentation about the 1915 PANAMA PACIFIC EXHIBITION. 7:30 pm. Randall Museum. 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; www.randallmuseum.org.

Feb. 21: Country/honky-tonk band RANCHO OELUXE performs music from its new CD, *True Freedom*. 8:30 pm. Café du Nord, 2170 Market. 861-5016; www.ranchodeluxe.org.

Feb. 22: 130 artists do live art for purchase at a Monster Drawing RALLY sponsored by Southern Exposure. 6-11 pm. Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa. 863-2141; soex.org.

Feb. 22: Janell Moon introduces her new book of POETRY, *Riding Free in a New Studebaker*. 7 pm. SF Center for the Book, 300 De Haro. 565-0545; www.sfcbook.org.

Feb. 23: Sandy Ross (8:30 am) and Swing Serenade (10:30 am) play the Noe Valley FARMERS' MARKET. 24th & Vicksburg. 248-1332; www.noevalleyfarmers-market.com.

Feb. 23: VOLUNTEERS can help weed Juri Commons Park, at a rain or shine workday; coffee and pastries provided. 9 am-1 pm. Between Guerrero & San Jose and 25th & 26th.

Feb. 23: Tom Bressan gives a workshop on IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, sponsored by Garden for the Environment. 10 am-1 pm. 7th Ave. & Lawton. Preregister 731-5627; info@gardenfortheenvironment.org.

Feb. 23: Join U.S. park ranger Peter Kasin and volunteer Richard Adrianowicz in a program of African American and Caribbean based WORK SONGS by sailors, dock workers, and fishermen. 3 to 3:45 pm. Aboard the *Balclutha* at Hyde Street Pier. 561-7000.

Feb. 23: The Manring Kassin Oarler trio performs a CONCERT at the Noe Valley Ministry. 8:15 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Feb. 24: Celebrate the start of the Chinese New Year with READINGS by detective novelist Ed Lin and poet Lisa Chen. Co-sponsored by the Asian American magazine *Hyphen*. 3 pm. Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia. 282-9246.

Feb. 25: The ODD MONDAYS series hosts short films from the Spiritual Cinema Circle. 7 pm; no-host dinner at Noe Valley Pizza, 5:30 pm (rsvp jlsender@webtv.net). 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Feb. 25-29: R. J. Reed presents replicas of remarkable INVENTIONS by Black Americans. Bayview/Anna E. Waden Branch Library, 5075 3rd. at Revere.

Feb. 26: Luis J. Rodriguez, Myron Michael Hardy, Beto Palomar, Mila Ortiz, and the WritersCorps YOUTH POETS read from their work. 7:30 pm. Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia. 863-2141; www.theintersection.org.

Feb. 28: Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* is the topic at the Bernal Heights Book Club. 4 pm. Bernal Heights Branch Library, 500 Cortland. 355-2810.

Feb. 28: Peekabootique's PARENTS PARTY offers wine, Orangina, and goldfish crackers. Last Thursday of the month. 5:30-7:30 pm. 1306 Castro. 641-6192.

Feb. 28: The group UPPER NOE Neighbors meets at the 30th Street Senior Center at 7:30 pm. 225 30th. 285-0473.

March 1: Forbeadin' holds an EARRING DESIGN class from 11 am to 2 pm. 1195 Church. Preregister at 641-1414.

March 2: Cellist Jennifer Culp and pianist Betty Woo perform music by Strauss and Rachmaninoff at Noe Valley CHAMBER MUSIC. 4 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. www.nvcm.org.

March right over here

and sit down. The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be the March issue, appearing in Noe Valley on Monday, March 3. If you send us your calendar items by the **Feb. 15** deadline, we'll do our best to publish them. Write *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, or email calendar@noevalleyvoice.com. Note: Events in Noe Valley get first preference, but we'll consider items from all around the city.

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The Storms of January, 2008 turned out to have a wild and wet beginning in Noe Valley and this tree on Noe at Alvarado St. fell victim.

Photo by Paula Whitehead

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Real Estate

Noe Valley Real Estate Experts at it Again

San Francisco, CA - The SellingSF team, one of Noe Valley's most successful real estate concerns, has listed another beautiful home in the neighborhood. The house at 3962 20th Street is located on one of the most coveted blocks in the city just steps from the ever popular Dolores Park. Like many neighborhoods in San Francisco Liberty Hill has a certain mystique that can be found in its tucked away, tree-lined streets and curving hillsides. Lesser known than other brethren hills such as Russian Hill and Nob Hill, Liberty Hill is no less prestigious and in many ways is more exciting than those San Francisco icons. This Victorian jewel located at number 3962 20th Street occupies a spot on one of the most coveted blocks in the Liberty Hill Historic District.

The home has all the charm of the Victorian period, exemplified in details such as cove ceilings, picture moldings, hardwood floors, and attractive built-in cabinetry. It also has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a bonus room ideal for a home office. The secluded yard boasts a hot tub and large deck that connects to the family room



3962 20th Street was just listed by the SellingSF team

through charming French doors that create a true sense of indoor/outdoor living. The garage and basement area offer ample room for parking and storage and combined with the other amenities make this wonderful house a comfortable place to call home.

Find SellingSF at www.SellingSF.com

Recent Neighborhood Transactions

254 28th Street 5 bedrooms 3.5 bathrooms
 3965 20th Street 4 bedrooms 3 bathrooms
 3870 25th Street 4 bedrooms 2.5 bathrooms
 4334 19th Street 4 bedrooms 2 bathrooms
 815 Douglass St 3 bedrooms 3 bathrooms
 4114 20th Street 3 bedrooms 1 bathrooms
 3711 20th Street 3 bedrooms 1.5 bathrooms
 73 Henry Street 3 bedrooms 2.5 bathrooms
 119 Hancock St 2 bedrooms 2 bathrooms
 323 29th #c401 2 bedrooms 2 bathrooms
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Sat. Feb. 9 7:30 p.m.	SF Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival with Peter Rowan Bluegrass Band, Eric & Suzy Thompson – Tix \$23 adv. / \$25 door
Sat. Feb. 23 8:15 p.m.	Manring Kassin Darter – Tix \$16 adv. / \$18 door

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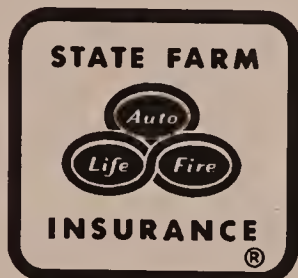


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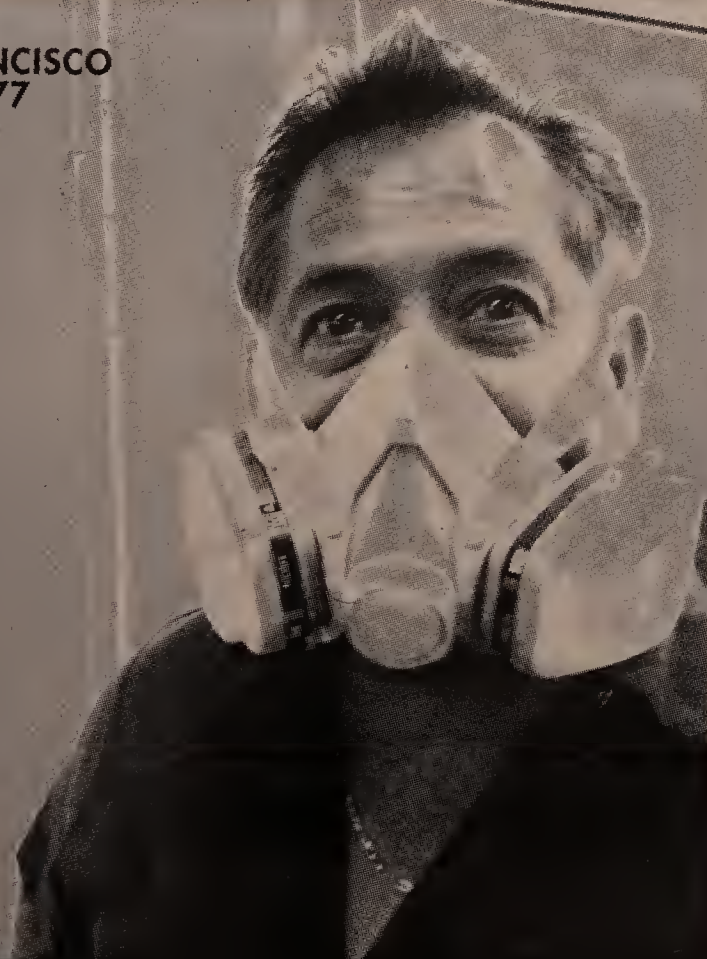
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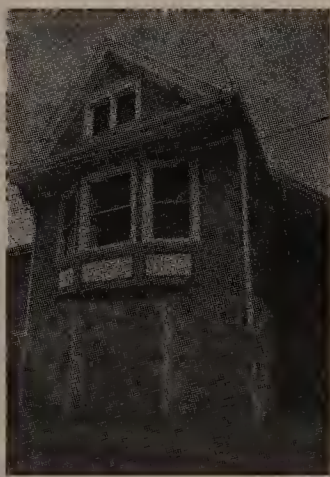


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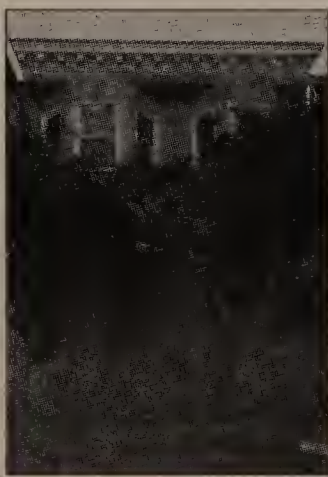
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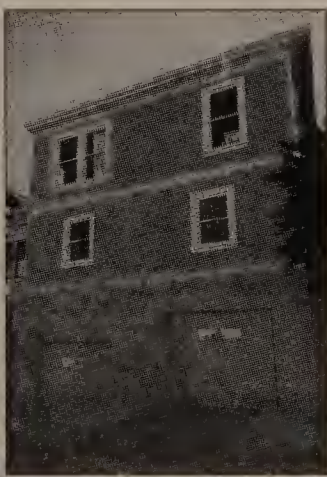
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STORE TREK

By Lorraine Sanders

Store Trek is a regular feature of the *Noe Valley Voice*, profiling new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we introduce a health and wellness clinic at Sanchez and 23rd streets, and a new restaurant run by a family that's owned businesses in the neighborhood for over two decades.

BASSO'S 3782 24th Street between Church and Chattanooga streets 415-285-3212

If there is one thing Noe Valley's newest eatery has in large supply, it's family. Three generations of Bassos can be found working under one roof at Basso's Restaurant, which opened in mid-December in the former Cybelle's Pizza space at the corner of 24th and Church streets.

Brothers Wayne and Gaetano Basso and Wayne's sons Tommy and Angelo Basso own and operate the dining establishment, and Tommy's daughter Laura works there as well. While it may be the first neighborhood joint to carry the Basso name, the restaurant is only the latest Basso family business to arrive in Noe Valley. Wayne has owned and operated Noe's Bar, which is connected to the restaurant, since opening it in 1982. In 1989, Gaetano opened a restaurant that effectively turned Noe's Bar into Noe's Bar and Restaurant. Gaetano sold that venture to Cybelle's in 1997.

Though the new restaurant has the same location as Gaetano's former restaurant and includes pizza on the menu, Basso's bears little resemblance to its predecessors, in either appearance or cuisine.

"We literally tore most of the building, down to the studs," says Gaetano, who estimates that the family spent close to seven months renovating the interiors.

Where pinball machines and sports memorabilia once dominated the decor, a semi-private dining space and lounge

area now connects Noe's Bar to Basso's casually refined dining room, outfitted with mustard- and cranberry-hued walls hung with Basso family photographs.

The menu is another departure from the past.

"The misconception is that we're [only] Italian. Our prime focus is our Niman Ranch natural beef products.... And we do pride ourselves on having a, albeit small, well-thought-out wine list," Gaetano says.

For neighborhood carnivores, the restaurant serves steaks in a variety of cuts, including a New York steak, two filet mignons, a 21-ounce porterhouse, and a 16-ounce T-bone (\$21.50 to \$34). Along with a fresh seafood catch of the day and pasta dishes like capellini with smoked salmon in a brandy cream sauce, specials like veal osso bucco (Thursdays) and crab cioppino (Fridays) are among the steak alternatives.

Specialties from chef Antonio May, who started his restaurant industry career with the Bassos back in 1992 and currently also holds down the fort at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Caffe Museo, range from the house-prepared ravioli to the banana chocolate bread pudding, served with crème anglaise.

Along with 11 wines by the glass (\$6 to \$14), the restaurant offers a selection of upscale cocktails (\$6 to \$8), including a Maker's Mark Manhattan and a Cam-



Chef Antonio May (far right) runs the kitchen at a new steakhouse whose owners include (from left) Gaetano, Wayne, and Tommy Basso. Photo by Beverly Thorp

pani Cosmo. Cocktails are also available in the adjacent bar, as is the restaurant's entire menu.

Despite the cafe's transformation, one fixture from Cybelle's does remain.

"We only have pizza now because we couldn't get rid of the machine," Gaetano laughs, referring to the steel behemoth of an oven that dominates the semi-open kitchen.

Basso's gourmet 12-inch pizzas (\$10.95 to \$14.95) are Neapolitan-style, with thin crusts and toppings ranging from exotic prosciutto and pear to classic Italian sausage and mushrooms.

In addition to being Noe Valley's first steakhouse, Basso's is doing one other thing other local eateries are not: keeping the kitchen open late.

The restaurant welcomes patrons 9 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Friday, and 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Saturday. (Brunch is served on weekends.)

"In the old days, there were lots of restaurants, all kinds of places [in San Francisco] open that late," Wayne recalls as he explains the reasoning behind Basso's later-than-usual hours. "Come in one minute to 12, and you'll get served."

NOE VALLEY CLINIC 3901 23rd Street at Sanchez Street 415-830-4744 www.noeclinic.com

Step into the serene confines of the Noe Valley Clinic, and you might mistakenly think you'd wandered into a day spa instead of a neighborhood doctor's office. A wood-paneled waiting area features inviting leather seats, slick track lighting, and walls hung with art by expressionistic painter Ross Lindsay.

"A lot of the look and feel is designed to be more aesthetically pleasing to patients," explains clinic owner Tom Lee, who also owns the Metropolitan Medical Group on Sutter Street and plans to open a third clinic in the Embarcadero Center this month.

But the attractive interiors of this neighborhood newcomer, which officially opened at the corner of 23rd and Sanchez streets on Nov. 10, aren't the only thing that sets this healthcare provider apart from a traditional medical practice.

On top of insurance copayments, patients pay the clinic an additional annual fee (\$129). In return, patients receive perks like same-day appointment scheduling, longer doctor-patient consultations, email access to doctors and health records, an online prescription refill service, and the benefit of non-physician, in-



Some of the welcoming faces at the Noe Valley Clinic are (left to right) nurse practitioner Valerie Sobel, receptionist Lorain Caruso, and Jade Schechter, M.D.

Photo by Pomelo Gerod

house healthcare providers who offer a bevy of additional services, from acupuncture to nutritional counseling.

"We have a half-hour to sit down and talk and come up with a treatment plan that works for [the patient]," says lead clinician Jade Schechter, M.D.

Along with Schechter and the clinic's other physician, Jenny-Viva Collisson, the in-house team consists of nutritionist Julie Matthews, acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine practitioners Michelle Kuroda and Jeannie Bianchi, nurse practitioner Valerie Sobel, and naturopathic healthcare providers Shaila Schwartz and Alex Tan.

Instead of the traditional referral method, the clinic aims to meet more of a patient's needs under one roof.

"It's a different service philosophy," Lee says.

The clinic specializes in general preventive and acute medical care for adults and accepts Medicare and most PPO and HMO health insurance plans. Uninsured adults who pay the clinic's membership fee will pay \$80 per visit, while non-members pay \$125 per visit.

The Noe Valley Clinic is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. Early morning and evening hours are available by appointment.



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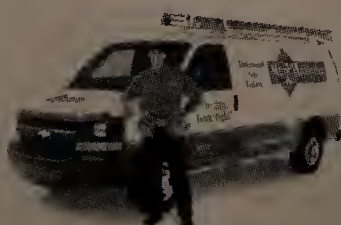


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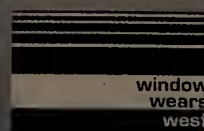
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NOE TELLING

BHGH Scholars at Home in Noe Valley

Twenty-fourth Street in Noe Valley is a place where new parents push their strollers, dot-com couples walk their tiny dogs, and shopkeepers display their lovely merchandise for the weekend foot

traffic. Dining choices around here span the world. In life's hustle and bustle, you would never know we are here...but we are.

If you have ever walked past our house, you probably didn't give it a second thought. A private residence; an extension of St. Philip's School perhaps. But no, it is our home. And we would like to introduce ourselves to the neighborhood once again (the *Voice* first published an article in June 2006).

In residence on 24th Street, between Douglass and Diamond, are seven young scholars who, together, comprise

the San Francisco chapter of Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH), a nonprofit that provides at-risk, yet academically capable, youth with a stable home, growth opportunities, positive parenting, and a high-quality education.

BHGH was founded on the belief that given better circumstances children with promise can reach their potential. Since 1991, the organization has been making a long-term commitment to fun-

damentally change children's environment from one that is

destructive to one filled with opportunity and hope.

The record speaks for itself. 100 percent of BHGH's high school graduates have gone on to college. Scholars have attended Harvard Law School, New York University, Penn State, Air Force Academy, Boston College, Dartmouth, Georgetown, and West Point, among others. The children enrolled in BHGH's program are as diverse as their reasons for needing the services, but they all have one thing in common: They have demonstrated academic potential and expressed the desire to

receive a quality education, but their family situation or community environment was not supporting their academic, social, emotional, or physical development.

At BHGH, scholars spend the school week with other kids, house parents, and college-age tutors, but can go home on weekends. Their parents can visit them, too. One would be surprised to learn that Darrell, a 13-year-old kid from the Tenderloin, has an affinity for Chinese history and Russian literature, and can probably tell you all you ever wanted to know (and all that you didn't) about the Mongol Empire. Oh, and he has a 3.5 GPA in one of the most challenging middle school programs in San Francisco. He is just one of many that BHGH won't let "fall through the cracks."

Naturally however, the BHGH scholars still experience lifestyle limitations as compared to their private-school peers. Since BHGH obviously cannot afford many "extras"—the organization is already providing housing, schooling, computers, medical benefits, etc.—it falls to compassionate individuals to further improve the scholars' circumstances. A recent fundraiser, hosted by the BHGH volunteers and held at Town Hall Restaurant, generated enough profit to set up an incentive-based learning system where if a scholar substantially increased his GPA, he "earned" the much-coveted iPod (yes, a "luxury" most Noe Valley kids take for granted).

So welcome us. Say hi if you see us on the street. And do take the opportu-

nity to make an impact and directly benefit some very deserving kids. It's quite easy to support our community-based organization. In addition to cash donations, we always need school supplies and household items. We can always use volunteer tutors and mentors. You can take us to the movies or help us with internship opportunities and college applications.

Oh yes, and if you own a restaurant, you can always send some pizza our way. Pasta Pomodoro and La Ciccia already have!

For more information, please visit www.bhghsf.org.

Katherine Ryzhaya is a volunteer and associate board member of Boys Hope Girls Hope. You can reach her at kryzhaya@gmail.com.



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what you have stored up that you'd like to say to your fellow readers of the *Voice*. Send your op-ed pieces, particularly those about Noe Valley people, places, or projects, to editor@noevalleyvoice.com. Please include an address and phone number. Thank you.



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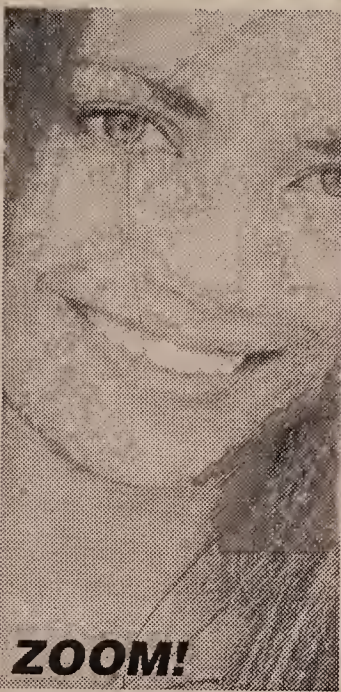
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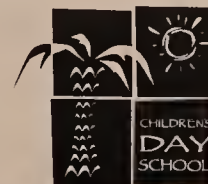
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A View from the Jury Box

Editor's Note: Writer and illustrator Florence Holub first penned this essay in October 1992, when jury duty was quite a bit more relaxed than it is today.

When Superior Court beckons, San Francisco voters had better respond obediently, or else be prepared to plead a case of extreme hardship.

I was first summoned for jury duty when my children were small, and on the third call I marched down to City Hall as mad as a hornet, demanding to know if they expected me to leave my young sons unsupervised. The sympathetic clerk told me that he would take care of it, and he certainly must have, because I didn't hear from the court again until last month. (My little ones are now middle-aged!)

So on a recent Monday morning I got in line with a couple of hundred other potential jurors outside the jury assembly room, to be registered and assigned to a court. The Superior Court waiting room at City Hall has been greatly improved since my last visit, even boasting a television set to enhance the waiting.

Eventually we were assigned to different groups, and each group was sent to one of the courts on the fourth floor. The groups were labeled by color—my group was "Rose," and the court of Judge Cahill was our destination. I never made it into the jury box, however, because one of the lawyers quickly dismissed me for undisclosed reasons. I was sent home to be on telephone standby.

Two days later, I received a call. The leftover Roses (and Silvers, and a few other colors) were being directed to the court of Judge Carlos Bea, whose stock of jurors had been drained, as one person after another asked to be excused. The case of the preceding days had just been settled out of court, but a class-action asbestos suit was about to replace it. After a 30-minute wait in the courtroom, we were told that this case had also been settled, but that another litigation would require our attention.

The Madam County Clerk administered the oath "to tell the truth and nothing but the truth" to everyone in the

room. One well-dressed young man refused to do so, and when asked why, responded by saying, "I deserve the right to give false and improper information." He was invited into the judge's chambers, along with a lady who had been holding a gurgling and cooing baby all morning. The rest of us took a break, and when we returned, the three of them were no longer among us.

Because the new case was complicated and would last for an estimated three weeks, the judge took three hours to hear the many financial hardship pleas from potential jurors. While we waited, Frieda—another Rose person—and I decided to check out the other courtrooms. Before doing so, we carried on a lively discussion concerning the pros and cons of jury duty. I felt that I was paying my dues to society, but Frieda, who had been called too often for her taste, complained that she was being overcharged and overworked.



We postponed our debate as we explored, and discovered that all the courtrooms looked the same except for two, which had original paintings on the walls. In Room 402, a brilliant modern abstraction in tones of red was an enlivening contrast to the sad and muted interior. Room 472 contained a large, somber, and mysterious canvas that held our attention for a short time, but as we left, we were arrested by a second painting, belonging to the San Francisco Arts Commission, which depicted a larger-than-life, perfectly rendered likeness of a mounted policeman, and bore the signature of Noe Valley artist Mark Adams. [Following an illustrious career, Adams died in early 2006, at the age of 80.—Ed.]

We then decided to inspect the enormous excavation made to accommodate the new library on the other side of Civic Center Plaza, and then to visit the old public library, where we could view the old-fashioned but poetic murals of another age, by Gottardo Piazzoni and Frank DuMond.

After that, we lunched leisurely at the cafeteria of the Hastings School of Law nearby, where contemporary art is also



exhibited. Here we found another creation by Mark Adams, this time in poster form—a Museum of Modern Art reproduction in rich reds titled "A Bowl of Borscht," which made our mouths water. I was struck by Adams' versatility, as I recalled his magnificent tapestry on exhibit at the de Young Museum, which featured a large lotus.

As we ambled back toward the court, we joined a spirited demonstration that was being held in the hope of restoring the state budget for programs for the disabled. We knew that the voices of City Hall demonstrators often wafted through the courtrooms. A few days earlier, we had listened to the chanting of those fighting to save the jobs of the janitorial union. We also heard from another group, shouting "Free Mary Jane!" in support of the little old lady who had been charged with baking cookies laced with marijuana, to ease the pain of the terminally ill.

Before our court case could proceed, all of the prospective jurors had to be questioned—first by the judge and then by all of the lawyers—to make sure they would be impartial. Frieda, who was determined to wriggle out of the whole thing, used every ploy that she could muster.

She raised her hand whenever a hint of an escape appeared. Seniors are exempt from jury duty, she ventured only to be informed that she was mistaken. She was a lawyer's wife, she declared, and as such should be disqualified. Good try, but not so.

And when the judge read off a list of witnesses and asked if anyone was acquainted with them or with any of the lawyers, up shot Frieda's hand. Further questioning, however, revealed that the witness had only sat on a panel of the book club that Frieda belonged to. Judge Bea asked her, "Do you think that I would believe that this could influence your judgment?"

"I was hoping so," Frieda blurted out. And everyone laughed at her honesty.

On that same day, Frieda was placed on the alternate row, and I was bounced over her to a seat on the jury. As I sat there, one of the lawyers called out Frieda's name, saying, "Mrs. T., I will excuse you because I think you have it coming to you!"

Everyone roared again, but the happiest person was Frieda, who triumphantly strode out of the courtroom.

We really missed her, but in the weeks that followed, we jurors who were thrown together almost at random turned out to be a friendly mixture. One young lady, Martha, lived in Noe Valley and read the *Voice* regularly, she said. Bill, who sat next to me, noticed my doodling and suggested the title for this article.

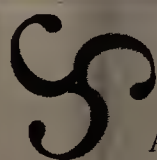
Because of the surroundings, several of us recalled our impressions of the mayor during whose tenure our City Hall was built. While taking in the beautiful detail of the fine civic building, we couldn't help but note the large Roman letters at the base of the cupola: "JAMES ROLPH JUNIOR," who served at the helm of San Francisco from 1912 to 1931.

Those years brought back fond memories to one couple on the jury. Al, who sat behind me, lived near the Civic Center as a boy. He often sailed paper airplanes down into the City Hall rotunda, and he kept track of the mayor's schedule, so that he would be present whenever "Sunny Jim" entered or left his office. Mayor Rolph had the habit of giving a quarter, which was a lot of money then, to any little boy he encountered. Little girls weren't neglected either. Another fellow juror, Jean, remembered how her father took her downtown so that she could meet the great man. She still remembers his smiling face.

And every day after jury duty, as I rode home on the J-car, I thought of what Helen Hughes Helfrich, my next-door neighbor for 25 years, had told me. She enjoyed remembering her first trip on the J-line after its completion. Her father took her, but it was Mayor Rolph who held her at the front of the car to the end of the line. Everyone loved "Sunny Jim," Noe Valley's favorite son! They just don't make mayors like that anymore.

At the end of each day in court, the judge admonished us not to speak or communicate in any way concerning the case, at risk of prosecution! And several weeks later, my lips are still sealed.

However, I think it is now permissible to mention that on more than one occasion, I heard a snore coming from someone seated behind me on the jury. Thank goodness for the interruption, though—it woke me up!



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SCHOOL REPORT

This month's public school news comes from boosters at Alvarado Elementary School and James Lick Middle School.

ALVARADO

Not-So-Silent Auction Tries to Top \$50,000

Want to support local businesses and a public school while getting a bargain? Come to Alvarado School's annual Not-So-Silent Auction the evening of March 8, and put in your bid for gift certificates to restaurants, clothing boutiques, and bookstores; discounted children's lessons; tickets to museums and sporting and cultural events; and hotel and vacation rentals—not to mention art and jewelry. The Live Auction features creative projects created by our talented students. And that's not all, either. Bidding takes place over chatter among friends, good food, and rollicking music at the Janet Pomeroy Center, 207 Skyline Boulevard, from 6 to 11 p.m.

Last year, our neighbors, friends, business community, and parents raised almost \$50,000. The money goes toward Alvarado's visual and performing arts programs, science projects, motor skills development, and other activities the San Francisco Unified School District fails to provide. It is the PTA's goal this year to finally break the \$50,000 level and ensure continued support for our excellent teachers and staff.

Having chalked up six years of auction experience, Noe Valley resident Angela Danison is co-chairing the auction this year, for the third time. Three of Danison's four children currently attend Alvarado, and her oldest son, an Alvarado

alumnus, is a sixth-grader at St. Philip School, another Noe Valley school.

"We couldn't possibly raise as much money for our school without the generous support of the Noe Valley merchants," Danison says. "Each year, the local businesses provide us with merchandise and services for our auction. In return, many of our families choose to shop in Noe Valley because they know the importance of these businesses to our community."

Students themselves contribute to the auction, too. Each class creates a unique piece of art that is put up for live bidding. "Our school is known for its arts program, and the auction is a perfect venue for showcasing the talents of our students," says Danison.

Many of those attending the auction will be school parents and alumni, but the event is open to all. "Whether you have children who will be entering school soon, are a neighbor of the school, or just want to bid, the auction is a great event to meet families and staff, see the amazing artwork that our students create, and support the children in our community," says Danison.

Music will be provided by the rock and Afro-Latin band Los Nadies. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. For more information on tickets, or to sponsor or donate to the auction, contact Gabriele Lange Edwards (648-6831), Angela Danison (642-8310), Nancy Velasco (Spanish, 695-5695), or send an email to alvarado2008auction@yahoo.com.

—Heather World

JAMES LICK

Principal Chats About Testing

During a recent Friday morning chat, Principal Carmelo Sgarlato spent an hour demystifying elements of the California Standards Test for a group of parents meeting in James Lick Middle School's new computer lab. Sgarlato passed out examples of the challenging questions used to test our sixth-graders in language arts, and then demonstrated how our teachers could use the feedback they received to track the progress of an entire class; reteach a concept to the whole class, a small group of students, or a specific child; or report an individual student's progress to inquiring parents.

Consultant Carrie Melton assisted in the presentation, answering technical questions and suggesting ways that parents could extend language learning at home. Parent Liaison Leonor Jackson provided expert simultaneous translation for the many Spanish-speaking parents in attendance. But no translation was necessary for parents to appreciate the 30 or so beautiful new Apple Macintosh flat-screen workstations that were recently installed in the lab—enough to accommo-

date an entire class with state-of-the-art computer equipment.

Odyssey to Costa Rica

Have you ever had the urge to visit a place where rainbow-billed toucans, leaping iguanas, and erupting volcanoes are as common as the pigeons, puppies, and fog found in our city? This month, 40 members of the James Lick community are traveling to Costa Rica to sample adventures in places like Manuel Antonio National Park, the Carara Biological Reserve, and Rincon de la Vieja Park in the Guanacaste Conservation Area.

Planning for this trip began nearly a year ago with informational meetings for students' families, followed by months of fundraising and more meetings to prepare for the trek, featuring eight days of visits to exotic cities, markets, historic sites, museums, jungle areas, parks, and schools—places where you might encounter a rare scarlet macaw or test the surf at the edge of a rain forest.

Everyone Benefits!

After weeks of clouds and rain, the sun made a welcome appearance on the morning of our Pancake Breakfast and Rummage Sale in January, a benefit for this year's field trip to Costa Rica. Many of our Noe Valley neighbors stopped by to share their own international travel experiences, as they poured syrup over plates heaped with fluffy cakes and savory sausages. Before leaving, families and friends browsed through stacks of clothing and collectibles for sale in the gym or dropped off outdated electronics in the upper playground—adding to the convenience and greenness of these combined Saturday events.

Join Us in the Playground

Our playground, bounded by Clipper and Castro streets, will soon be open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The weekend sharing of the blacktop is part of a joint city/SFUSD pilot program designed "to fill the need for children and families to gather and play."

Experiment with a Science Fair

If you're in the neighborhood on Wednesday, Feb. 13, around 6 p.m., be sure to check out the James Lick Science Fair taking place in the school gym. Our students will demonstrate exciting experiments and answer questions about their hypotheses, data, and conclusions. Ribbons will be awarded for first-, second-, and third-place finishes in each of the

classrooms, and the best entries will compete at the district science fair at the Randall Museum March 4 to 7.

Welcome to Community Movie Night

James Lick will host a monthly Community Movie Night on the last Saturday of the month, beginning Feb. 23. We will offer two films each night. For movie selections and times, look for flyers posted around the school's campus and on 24th Street, or check our web site listings: www.JamesLickPTSA.org.

Shape-Up Program 'Jogs' to N.Y.

Inspired that our students have already covered the 1,016-mile length of the California coastline by walking and running laps around the upper playground—and are having a lot of fun while doing so—the P.E. Department has decided to continue tracking miles until the end of the school year—but this time with a new goal: to reach New York City by June (2,582 miles as the crow flies). Kids will be logging laps every Friday on the perimeter of the upper yard, so please do cheer them on if you walk by. The students are also preparing for the state physical education fitness assessment in February and March. Can you do 15 pushups or run a mile under seven minutes?

G-O-A-L!

Congratulations to our defending city championship soccer team for reaching the playoffs again this year and *winning both of their playoff games*. James Lick beat Presidio in the first round (5-2) and then went on to defeat Hoover (7-1). That means we'll play in the championship game at Kezar Stadium again this year. (Last year, we were district champions for the first time since 1967!)

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for local volunteers to help students with writing projects for our new joint venture with 826 Valencia, the tutoring center and literary pirate hangout on Valencia Street. Please contact Assistant Principal Bitia Nazarian for more information.

—Sue Cattoche



SCHOOL CONTACTS

Fairmount Elementary School
Karling Aguilera-Fort, Principal
65 Chenery Street at Randall
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Alvarado Elementary School
Robert Broecker, Principal
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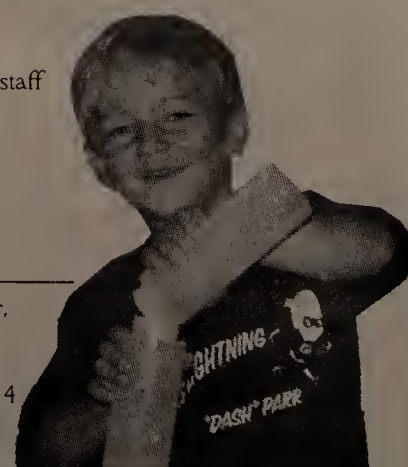
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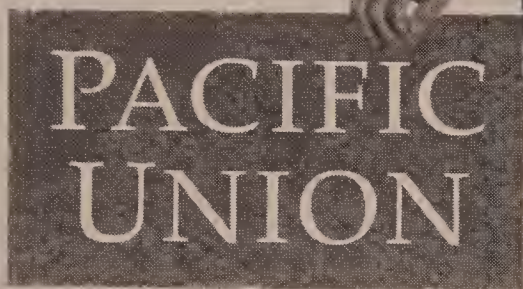


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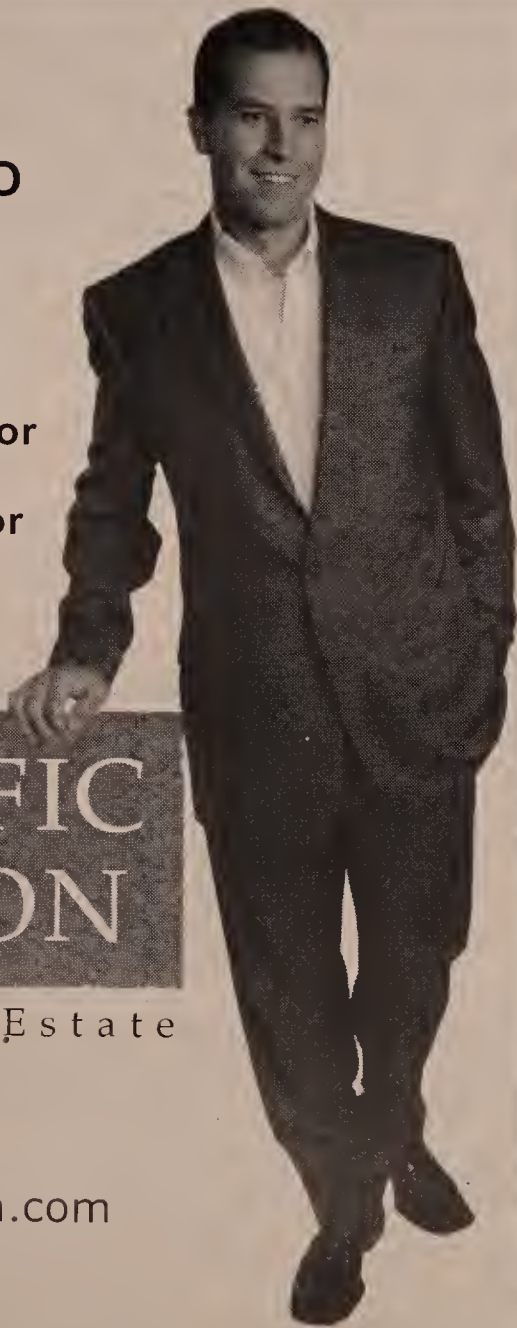


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MORE BOOKS TO READ

Two highlights of this month's reading list, provided by *Voice* bookworm Karol Barske and Eureka Valley Librarian Pam Ow, are a tome about toothpicks and a story about an anxious monster named Bobo. To see if the books are available, drop by your local branch or visit the San Francisco Public Library at www.sfpl.org. Note: The Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Branch Library at 451 Jersey Street is set for a grand reopening on March 8 (see front page).

Adult Fiction

- A former heroin addict and hooker searches for a missing college girl in Hell's Kitchen in Sara Gran's 1950s noir novel *Dope*.
- Yannick Murphy details the life of the Dutch dancer and suspected World War I spy, in *Signed, Mata Hari*, a fictional story based on fact.
- A homeless woman in San Francisco tries to find her long-lost husband and turn her life around in *My Dreams Out in the Street*, by Kim Addonizio.
- In Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Bad Girl*, a woman who reappears in various locations and disguises haunts a young Peruvian man for two decades.

Adult Nonfiction

- In *The Toothpick: Technology and Culture*, Henry Petroski traces the history of this handy item from caveman times to today, and the etiquette rules it has engendered.
- *Elmore Leonard's 10 Rules of Writing* was originally published in the *New York Times* as "Easy on the Adverbs, Exclamation Points, and Especially Hooptedoodle."
- Robert Hardman offers a historic portrait of how Elizabeth II runs the modern British monarchy in *A Year with the Queen*.
- In *Sightings: Extraordinary Encounters with Ordinary Birds*, Sam Keen meditates on the marvels of avian life, from sparrows to turkey vultures.

—Annotations by Karol Barske of the Noe Valley Voice staff

Children's Fiction, Folktales, and Poetry

- Armed with the helpful advice of his grandpa, a young monster named Bobo finds the courage to deal with the scary human boy who appears beneath his bed at bedtime, in *Jitterbug Jam*. This great read-aloud story by Barbara Jean Hicks is illustrated by Alexis Deacon. *Ages 3 to 7*.
- In *George and the Dragon*, author-illustrator Chris Wormell offers a surprising hero who rescues the princess from a mighty dragon. *Ages 3 to 7*.

■ Jack Prelutsky's collection of short, rhyming poems, *The Frogs Wore Red suspenders*, is charmingly illustrated by Petra Mathers' paintings. *Ages 4 to 8*.

■ F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada retell 12 stories from oral and literary sources, accompanied by background notes, that celebrate the diverse roots of Hispanic culture in *Tales Our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection*. Paintings by Felipe Dávalos, Viví Escrivá, Susan Guevara, and Leyla Torres enhance the text. Also available in Spanish, *Cuentos que contaban nuestras abuelas*. *Ages 6 to 10*.

■ Gary Paulsen brings us 12-year-old Duane's diary, wherein he records the daily traumas brought on by puberty (zits, strange dreams, clumsiness, girls!) as well as his observations of a newborn bird's growth, in *The Amazing Life of Birds*. *Ages 10 to 14*.

■ *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman is a richly imagined fantasy and adventure story in which Lyra Belacqua (with her daemon Pantalaimon) rescues kidnapped children, finds out who her parents are, and wonders whether she can ever go to a city faintly seen in the Aurora Borealis. The movie of the same name, which opened recently, is based on this book. Recommended by Noe Valley Children's Librarian Carol Small. *Ages 10 to adult*.

—Annotations by Pam Ow, Children's Librarian Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Memorial Branch

LIBRARY EVENTS

Lapsits and Story Times

■ The Noe Valley Library invites you to enjoy stories, songs, and finger plays with your baby or toddler at the *lapsits* held on Tuesdays, Feb. 5, 19, and 26, at 10:15 a.m. *Preschool story time*, a read-aloud program for kids ages 3 to 5, follows at 11 a.m. Until the library reopens in March, programs are held at Bethany United Methodist Church, 1268 Sanchez Street at Clipper Street.

The Bookmobile Stops Here

■ You can get a library card and check out books, CDs and DVDs at the *Noe Valley Bookmobile*, which parks on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 665 Elizabeth Street near Diamond.

Meet a Juggling Dog

■ *Juggler Dana Smith* will perform an interactive show accompanied by his dog Lacey on Friday, Feb. 8, 3:45 to 4:30 p.m., at the Eureka Valley Library, on 16th Street. The branch also hosts an *afternoon story time* on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4 p.m.

Make a Valentine, See 'Mama Yo'

■ The Glen Park Library at 2825 Diamond Street will offer a *Valentine's Day craft class* for kids 5 to 12, on Saturday, Feb. 9, 3 to 4 pm. Space is limited. Register with the librarian. On Tuesday, Feb. 26, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., storyteller *Yolanda Rhodes* will share folktales from her African roots.

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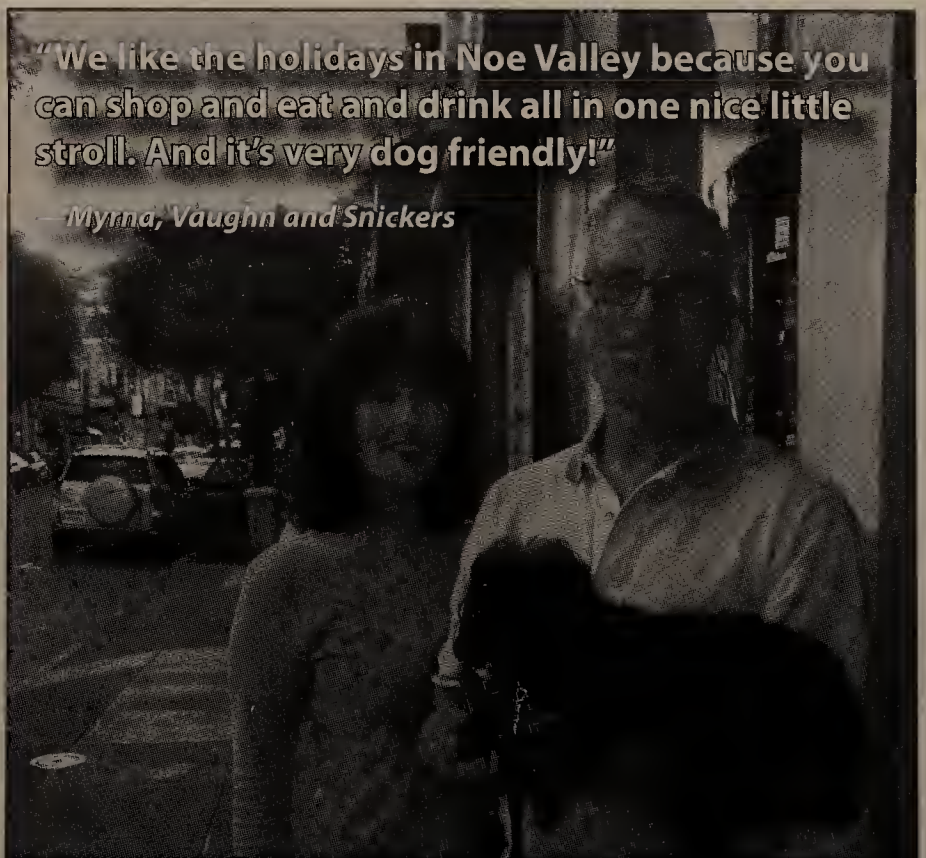
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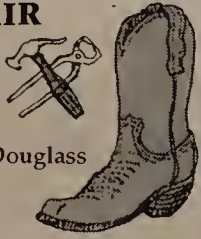
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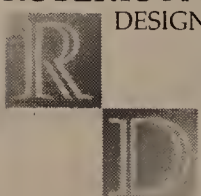


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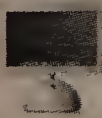
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The next *Voice* will be the March 2008 issue, distributed in Noe Valley the first week of March. **The deadline for Class Ads is Feb. 15.** Note: The Class Ads are displayed for one month (or two in the case of the December or July issues) on our web site: www.noevalleyvoice.com.

Class advertisers should keep in mind that only the first few words of the ad (not to exceed one line of type) will be set in bold. Also, receipts and tear sheets will be provided only if your order is accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Thank you for your support.

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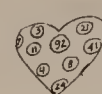
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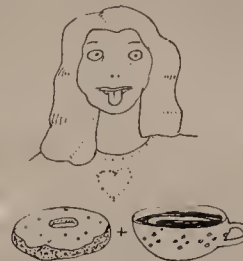
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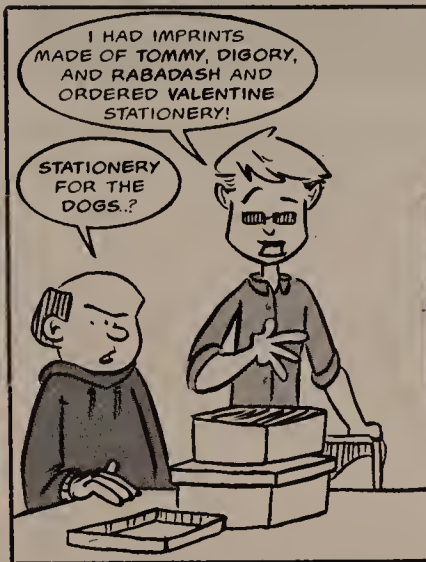
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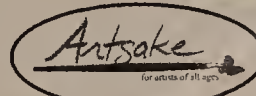
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and now for the RUMORS behind the news

Weather Retort

By Mazook

WHOLE LATTE CLIMATE GOIN' ON: The New Year blew into Noe Valley on Jan. 3, when three storm systems descended upon us bearing gale-force winds from the Gulf of Alaska. Trees fell, power lines snapped, and sewers flooded. Teeth and nerves rattled in the Valley, and the blips spiked on the Rumors radar.

Evidently, the uprooted tree that fell across the intersection of Sanchez and Jersey (the bottom of the trunk is still there) made national news—relatives from Santa Barbara called to ask if it had toppled near a certain reporter's home. Some households in Noe Valley were singled out for special punishment and lost electricity for days. Let's hope no novels were lost. (Back up that computer *now*.)

During the minihurricane the morning of Friday, Jan. 4, Downtown Noe Valley was deserted, with only the occasional pedestrian braving the elements to scamper across 24th Street to Bell. The next day, many locals went through a double-shot of anxiety when they saw that the local Starbucks was among the stores closed due to lack of power. When the place stayed dark through the weekend and into Tuesday, jittery patrons and neighborhood denizens began to speculate that the chain was following in the footsteps of the 24th Street Tully's, which grinded to a halt last fall. (Don't worry—"local girl" Bernadette Melvin took over

the Tully's site and is keeping the neighborhood full of beans.) People also starting getting frothy because Starbucks Corporate announced the same stormy week that it would replace its chief executive and restructure the company due to competition with McDonald's new McCafes.

Well, all the excitement died down when the 24th Street Starbucks reopened quietly at 5:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 9. The explanation from a barista: "The power was knocked out. That's all I can tell you."



THE GRASS IS GREENER: After the storms, a calm fell over our vale, and the first glimpse of sunshine drew everyone outdoors. It wasn't long before families with little ones discovered that Rec and Park had removed the construction fences and opened the gates at the newly built children's playground at Noe Courts park at Douglass and 24th streets. It was kinda like, "If you build it, they will come."

"We all were happy that the playground unceremoniously opened [on Jan. 11], and a lot of families showed up as the news spread," said Laura Norman, one of the most loyal and active Friends of Noe Courts Playground. "They expanded the size of the play area, built ramps for wheelchairs and strollers, and put in some nice picnic tables. There's a rubberized surface, a sandbox with a fence around it for toddler safety, and they installed play structures for a wider range of ages."

The Rec and Park budget for the expansion came to \$452,000, and Norman reports that FNCP has collected about \$20,000 through its fundraising events. (For more info, contact the group at noe-courts@gmail.com.)

To celebrate the park's reopening, FNCP and Rec and Park are planning a Valentine's and Lunar New Year Party, with a short playground dedication, on Saturday, Feb. 9, at 11 a.m. According to

Rec and Park spokesperson Rose Dennis, there will be three crafts tables where everyone can make valentines.

And District 8 Supervisor Bevan Dufty has confirmed he will attend, especially so he can thank everybody who volunteered their time, energy, and money to make the playground a reality.

In other park news, we should thank San Francisco Beautiful for the grant that put a brand-new drinking fountain for humans and dogs in Upper Douglass Park.



UPPER NOE'S TOP REMODEL: Progress on the renovation of Upper Noe Rec Center at Day and Sanchez has been stalled for the past two months because of those darn Alaska storms, among other things, and it's a big topic of discussion at Upper Noe Neighbors meetings.

Reports UNN chief Vicki Rosen, the March 2008 opening date anticipated by Rec and Park has been pushed back a month or two. Alex Randolph, from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, informed Rosen that "there have been some unexpected issues that surfaced with this project, which include the HVAC system, rotten roof beams, rain delays, and additional work on the Dog Play Area." And that was in December, pre-hurricane.

Randolph assured everyone that while weather had stalled the exterior work, there was a lot of work under way on interior areas of the building that could not be easily seen by the neighbors, in the gymnasium, auditorium, kitchen, and restrooms.

Rose Dennis of Rec and Park says her best estimate of when the gates to the new Noe Valley Recreation Center will open is May. But I'm thinkin' maybe June.

The budget on this whole project, by the way, is a not-too-shabby \$10.5 million, according to Rec and Park reports.

The community group Friends of Noe

Valley Recreation Center is planning a big party to celebrate the reopening, whenever it actually occurs. The members also are raising funds for amenities not in the Rec and Park budget, like a sound system, movie screen, and piano for the stage area in the auditorium, and play structures and toys for the tiny-tots area. Check out their web site at noevalleyreccenter.com.



WE GOT MILK: Downtown Eureka Valley, a.k.a. the Castro, has undergone a Hollywood retro makeover for *Milk*, a film about the life of gay pioneer Harvey Milk, the city supervisor killed along with Mayor George Moscone 30 years ago next November.

A trip over the hill will send you back in time. Castro Street from 18th to Market has been transformed into the way it looked in 1977, when Milk was elected to the Board in the city's first election by district. (Noe Valley was part of Milk's constituency; Harvey even wrote a few columns for the *Noe Valley Voice*.)

The Castro Theatre has been painted to look like it did back then, and it looks marvelous. Milk's camera shop (Castro Camera, at 575 Castro) has been reincarnated, and the gollywooders have even recreated some esoteric icons, like Double Rainbow's first ice cream shop, three doors up from the theater. It is cool seeing all the vintage '70s cars, taxis, and police squad cars.

The film is being produced by Academy Award winners Dan Jinks and Bruce Cohen (*American Beauty*) and will star Sean Penn as Harvey Milk. The cast also includes Emile Hirsch, Josh Brolin, Diego Luna, and Victor Garber.

According to the production company's spokesperson, James Ferrera, movie director Gus Van Sant will be filming in

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RUMORS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the Castro through the first week of February. On Feb. 4, plans are to stage the "Milk March" on Castro, starting north of 18th Street. The call was put out for extras to show up in their '70s garb, and according to Ferrera, "the response has been overwhelming."

The world premiere of *Milk* will no doubt be at the Castro Theatre, which deserves a red carpet event after such a great facelift.



HOT CHOCOLATE: The world premiere of *In Search of the Heart of Chocolate* is set for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 12 at Delancey Street (600 Embarcadero). Bay Area filmmaker Sarah Feinbloom (*What Do You Believe?*) set her creation partly in Downtown Noe Valley, and the film features many locals.

The 24-minute "chocumentary," according to Feinbloom, follows her as she searches for the origins of her chocolate obsession, interviewing chocolate enthusiasts along the way. Appearing in the film are Jack Epstein, owner of Chocolate Covered on 24th Street, and a few of his regular customers: Richard Anderson, Suzanne McKee, and Arielle Singer. Chocolate Covered, as you other chocolate aficionados know, opened in Noe Valley 14 years ago.

"We did our interviews right on 24th Street," says Feinbloom, "which is a special place where you can still find a lot of mom-and-pop kind of unique stores that are run by interesting folks like Jack."

The screenings (first one at 6:30 and a second at 7:30) will be followed by a "chocolate reception" catered by Charles

Chocolates from the East Bay and our own Noe Valley Bakery, famous for its chocolate croissants.

Tickets for the event (\$10 each) can be obtained via info@chocumentary.com, along with a DVD of the short for \$19.99.

"I've not seen the film yet," says Epstein, "but it should be fun. It comes right in time for a busy day around here, Valentine's Day."

Chocolate Covered was also one of the recommended places to visit in the current issue of AAA's travel magazine *Via*, which did a piece on 24th Street from Potrero to Douglass. Other locals mentioned were Martha's Coffee, 24th Street Cheese, Noe Valley Bakery, Hamano Sushi, Lovejoy's Tea Room, the S.F. Mystery Bookstore, Good News, Gallery of Jewels, Qoio, Bliss Bar, and Firefly.



SHORTSHIRTS: Vendima, the vintage clothing store, is closing its doors at the corner of 24th and Castro after a two-year run. "We are going online now, and into Internet sales," says owner Graciela Ronconi, who formerly operated Guys and Dolls (down 24th below Church) for 11 years. Ronconi wishes to thank all her Noe Valley customers for their loyalty and friendship over the years.

The fate of the "Blue Church" on the corner of 28th and Church should, by the time this paper hits the streets, be in the hands of a jury in San Francisco Superior Court. If the developer wins his civil case, there will be a long-awaited celebration and a knockdown of the building with a wrecking ball.

Neighbors around Noe Valley have been notified by PG&E that rather large "electronics cabinets with power panels" are planned for 22nd Street near Noe, Douglass near 22nd, Diamond near Alvarado, Castro near 22nd, and Church near 24th. These boxes will provide dig-



The official dedication of Noe Courts on 24th Street will be Feb. 9, but kids and families couldn't resist when the park's new swings and slides were unveiled in mid-January.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

ital services (via fiber optics) to the neighborhood, but might be considered unsightly (or worse). The utility is asking for a neighborhood response, so speak up.



THE BARBER OF NOE VALLEY: There's only one barber in the neighborhood, Stephanie Smith, now that her father, Mike Skoufas, retired last month. Skoufas had been shaving and trimming Noe Valleyans since 1953.

Skoufas started at Martin's Barber Shop (where Tamasei Sushi is now) but has occupied a string of locations in the Valley. In 1977, when his shop used to be where the back of Pasta Pomodoro's dining room is now, he was joined by his daughter. Most recently, Skoufas was working part-time at Of Barbers and Bears, which was opened by Stephanie in 2003 on 24th Street above Castro.

"My daughter is the only licensed barber left in Noe Valley," claims Skoufas. "All the other haircutters have cosmetology licenses, and they can do everything barbers do and more, except shaving. When a barber gets a cosmetologist license, then they become 'hair stylists.'"

Skoufas, who is 78 years young, says he is spending time with his wife Donna and enjoying babysitting his grandchildren.

Smith says she misses having her dad in the next chair. She is looking for a barber to take his place, "but it seems that basic barbers are hard to find these days."



THE LAST WORD before I go is: *Vote*. Remember to cast your primary election ballot on Tuesday, Feb. 5. I really am hoping that voter turnout in Noe Valley will exceed the 41 percent who showed up on Nov. 6, 2007. That's 30. Ciao for now.

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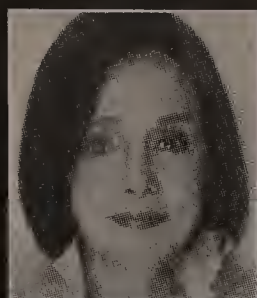
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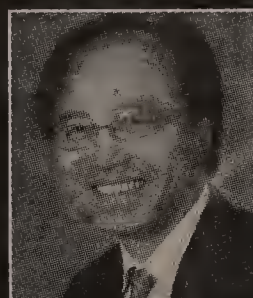
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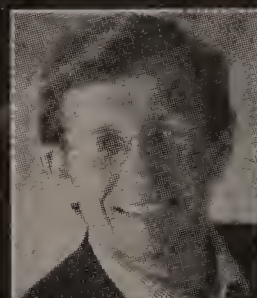
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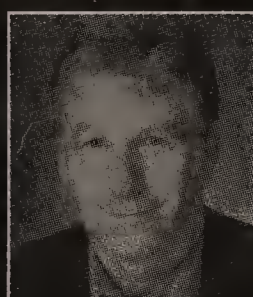
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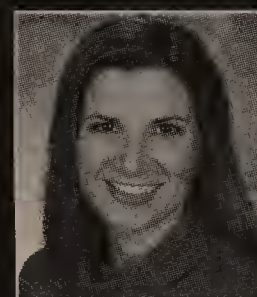
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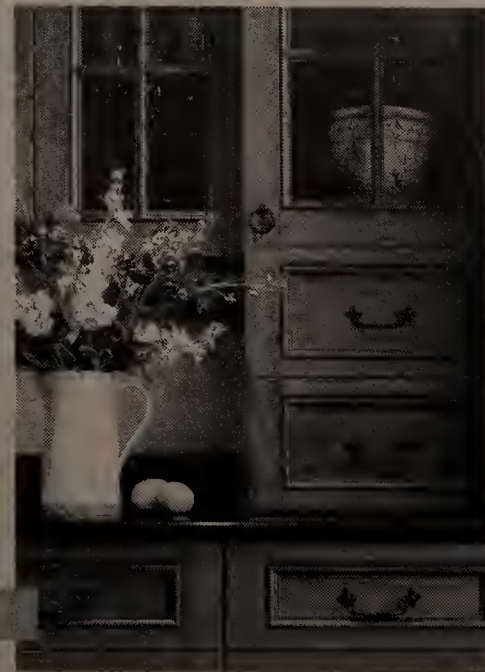
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Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100
Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Church Street Professionals

Contacts: Lynn Ingham, 643-5966,
or Paula Benton, 248-0235
Email: bentonp@sprynet.com
Meetings: Third Monday, every other
month. Location varies.

Diamond Heights Community Association

Contact: Betsy Eddy, 239-5776
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529,
San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Thursday of the month, 7:30
p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

Contact: Amy Powell, 647-4228
Mailing Address: 3732 21st St.,
San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Board meetings bimonthly; mem-
bership semi-annually. Call for details.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

Contacts: Pat Lockhart, 282-9360;
Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or
Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St.,
San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club

Contact: Paul Kantus, 647-3753
Mailing Address: 492 Douglass St.,
San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Irregular, call to confirm.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association

Contact: Lion Barnett, 255-3624
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137,
San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Third Thursday of the month
(except December), Eureka Valley Recrea-
tion Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Fair Oaks Neighbors

Contact: Joyce Kurtz, 401-6362
Mailing Address: 261 Fair Oaks St., San
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MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Meetings: Call for information. Note: The
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Fairmount Heights Neighborhood Association

Contact: Gregg Brooks
Email: sflyric@yahoo.com
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31059, San
Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Email for details.

Friends of Dolores Park Playground

Contact: Eli Merritt, 415-285-3774
Email: emerr@earthlink.net
Mailing Address: 3786 20th St., San
Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Email for information.

Friends of Glen Canyon Park

Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San
Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

Friends of Noe Courts Playground

Contact: Laura Norman
Email: lauranor@yahoo.com
Mailing Address: c/o Friends of Noe Valley,
P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: Email for dates and times.

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

Contact: Richard May
Email: rambooks@pacbell.net
Web site: www.friendsofnoevalley.com
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 460953, San
Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: First or second Thursday of the
month (call or email to confirm), at
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Friends of On Lok's 30th Street Senior Center

Contact: Marianne Hampton, 601-7845
Mailing Address: 225 30th St., San
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Meetings: Occasional. Call for details.

Friends of Noe Valley Recreation Center and Park

Contact: Alexandra Torre
Email: noe_park@atorre.com
Web site: www.noevalleyreccenter.com
Meetings: Email or check web site.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

Contact: John Barbey, 695-0990
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Noe Valley Ministry (co-sponsor), 1021
Sanchez St., 8 p.m.

Noe Valley Library Campaign

Contacts: Kim Drew, 643-4695,
kkdrew@yahoo.com; Marian Chatfield-
Taylor, 626-7512, ext. 103
Mailing Address: Friends of the
San Francisco Public Library, 391 Grove St.,
San Francisco, CA 94102
Meetings: Call for information.

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)

Contacts: Donna Davis, 647-2116, or Teresa
Gay, 336-6304
Email: info@noevalleymerchants.com;
register at www.noevalleymerchants.com.
Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month.
Email for location and time.

Noe Valley Parent Network

An email resource network for parents
Contact: Mina Kenvin
Email: minaken@gmail.com

Noe Valley Preparedness Committee

Contact: Maxine Fasulis, 641-5536
Email: mfasulis@yahoo.com
Meetings: Call for details.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants

Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500
Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San
Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Call for details.

San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets

Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188
Email: contact@sanjoseguerrero.com
Web site: www.sanjoseguerrero.com
Meetings: See web site.

See Jane Run Running/Walking Club

Contact: Lori Shannon, 401-8338
Mailing Address: 3870 24th Street, San
Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Sundays, 10 a.m. (Runners meet
at See Jane Run to pick up the 5K run/walk
route. Info? www.SeeJaneRunSports.com.)

Southwest Mission Neighborhood Association (SWMNA)

Boundaries: 24th Street to Cesar Chavez and
Fair Oaks to Mission
Contact: Lori Oshiro, Secretary
Email: lori@tail-wagging.com
Web site: www.tail-wagging.com
Meetings: Email for information.

Upper Noe Neighbors

Contact: Vicki Rosen, 285-0473
Mailing Address: 169 Valley St., San
Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Last Thursday of the month (call
to confirm), 30th Street Senior Center, 225
30th St., 7:30 p.m.

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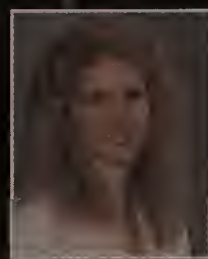
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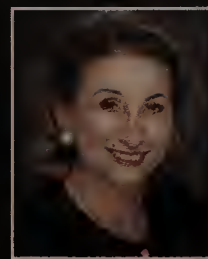
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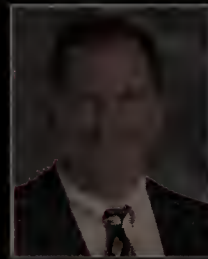
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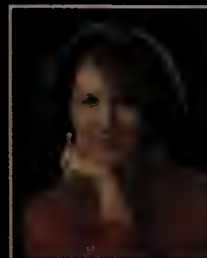
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The Valentine Lovers' Hike

◆ BY JEANNE HALPERN ◆

"Hey, Louis," called Bob Muller to the man sitting on the log. "What are you doing there?"

Though I was walking up front with Bob, the hike leader, I hadn't noticed the tall man with the yellow bandana around his neck. He shouted back to Bob: "Just waiting for you, hoping you'd take this trail back. I got to the Alpine Club too late to start out with you."

"Hi," I said, offering this new hiker my hand to shake. His fingers felt cool against mine, like a touch of Redwood Creek. "Looks like you picked just the right spot to wait. I'm Jeanne Halpern."

"Hmmm," he hesitated a moment, then smiled. "Yes, I've heard about you. You lead hikes in San Francisco, right? The Movies Hike — everybody talks about that — and something about canyons... I'm Louis Prisco."

I felt flattered, but even more, a sense of anticipation. *Here's one more chance to reach my goal.* I'd come on this annual Sierra Club hike leaders' bash on Mount Tamalpais hoping to get advice on Potrero Hill, which I had to cross on an upcoming hike. But over the last hour and a half, as we looped down to Muir Woods and back toward the Alpine Club, I'd asked every hike leader where he or she led hikes, and the answer was always Marin or the East Bay. *But do I have another goal as well? Since I moved to San Francisco five years ago, a widow, I've met every man I dated on a Sierra Club hike.*

"And where do you lead hikes?" I asked Louis.

"Oh, mainly Mount Tam. San Bruno Mountain, too. Once in a while in the city."

"Where in the city?"

"Different places," he said. "South of Market, Bernal Heights, Potrero Hill..."

"Jackpot!"

He looked startled. I explained that I wanted to fill a hole in my January hike in the South of Market area. Smiling and nodding, he offered to teach me the hill. *Maybe Louis has a goal for this outing, too?*

At the end of our hike, when we reached the Alpine Club, we sat next to each other under the fall foliage at the potluck lunch. A recent graduate of Jenny Craig, I nibbled at some fruit salad and a piece of barbecued chicken breast. I couldn't take my eyes off Louis' pyramid of potato salad, bean salad, green salad, fruit salad, pasta salad, pickles, two hot dogs, a hamburger in a bun, and two brownies. He said, with a wide, unembarrassed smile, "I love to eat." To which I answered, "I love to cook."

As I was leaving the party, he said, "Whenever you want to walk Potrero Hill..." and handed me a small piece of paper with his name and phone number on it. I slipped it into a drawer when I got home.

About a month later, I left a message on his voice mail that I'd call about Potrero Hill after I did my Fountains and Falls hike at Halloween. *Mmmmm. This is his work number — a signal he's married?*

He surprised me by turning up at 10 a.m. at the Ferry Building for the fountains walk. Eight miles later, near the entrance to the old Academy of Sciences museum in Golden Gate Park, where we were

headed to see our last fountain, I invited him to join a small group of hikers at dinner at a Chinese restaurant on Irving Street.

"I'd like to, but — other plans," he said. *Ah, his wife's got dinner on the table.*

Two weeks later, a cream-colored envelope arrived with his name and return address. I savored its textured linen weave between my fingers as I would an expensive fabric. Then I slid a letter opener across the top. His note began, "Your fountains hike Oct. 30 was exceptionally imaginative, a work of art." *I really ought to get back to him soon, before he forgets.*

During a long trip to the East Coast, I sent Louis a note saying I'd call as soon as I got home. We scheduled a walk over Potrero Hill for mid-December, but it rained that Saturday.

When I phoned to postpone and we'd talked a while, I said, "How about a movie?"

"Which one?"

"*Anna Christie*, the unexpurgated German original, at the Castro," I answered, thinking how much fun it would be to see Greta Garbo in her first talking movie. He agreed immediately.

After the show, since Louis had a cold, I invited him home for some of my curative, homemade chicken soup with rice.

"Yes," he said, as I refilled his bowl a second time, with soup so hot it steamed up his glasses. "I'm glad you love to cook."

The next day, warm with December sunshine, he showed me the ins and outs of Potrero Hill, kissing me at every opportunity — at the top near the recreation center, inside a community garden at a plot filled with carnivorous plants, and even on noisy Potrero Boulevard. The rest, as they say, is history — but not ours alone.

MANY HIKES LATER and after we'd lived together a few years, we decided to share our happiness with other Sierra Club hikers by creating a Valentine Lovers' Hike. This hike, too, would be followed by a potluck at the Alpine Club, but with music and dancing and a large chocolate sheet cake topped with red roses and "Lovers' Hike" spelled out in red frosting inside a big red heart.

The true heart of the day, though, would be the hike. The route would duplicate the one Bob Muller had led on Mount Tam, but our hike would also be different: at every stop, we'd read a poem — about nature or love. And when we reached the log where Louis had been sitting the day we met, we'd reenact our meeting, with Bob Muller repeating his Cupid line, "Hey, Louis. What are you doing there?" To which Louis would again answer, "Just waiting for you," but this time he'd look straight at me.

We had no trouble choosing where to stop or which poems worked best at a waterfall or a redwood tree. But once we reached the place for our dramatic reenactment, the core of our hike, we couldn't find the log.

"I'm positive you were sitting right here, at this bend in the trail." I stamped my foot at the exact point where I knew the log had been. I stared down

over the steep, wooded slope to catch a glimpse of the log, sure it had rolled over. I knew I'd be able to find it and say, "See, it's right here!"

"No, darn it, the log was over there, at an angle," Louis pointed down the trail about 40 feet, his boots crunching cinders as he strode. "I should know! I spent more than half an hour prowling around, looking over that little rise in the hill so I could see the group coming. I was here. You were just walking by!" He tried to edge his way down to what he thought was our log. Turned out to be a newly fallen tree, too small anyway. The park service, we agreed, must have hauled our log away.

From behind us, a woman's voice called, "Louis, you hiking here today, too?" Her words sounded like chimes, her green straw hat was fastened down with a billowy scarf. Her name was Karen and she'd been on several of Louis' hikes. Once we recounted the tale of the missing log, she offered an explanation more captivating than any we'd come up with.

"I feel sure," she said, "that your log was placed here by Venus, goddess of love, so you two would meet. And after the log had served its purpose, Venus withdrew it and took it back to the upper world for future use." *Hmmmm. Well, who knows?*

On the day of our hike, when we reached the spot Louis had chosen for the reenactment, we began with Karen's Venus story. Right after the log-less minidrama, we asked each hiker to say something about him- or herself. We hoped they'd have gotten to know one another during the walk and maybe even paired up. We'd planned the hike to give them just such a chance.

But as we went around the circle of 29 men and women, ranging in age from about 30 to 70, we found no lovers-in-waiting. Only couples who had met on Sierra Club hikes over the years and were now dating or married. Why the odd number? One hiker's wife was home sick.

While we had not exactly achieved our goal, we did confirm an axiom of romance: that shared interests bring lovers together. Now, nearly 15 years after our first meeting on Mount Tam, Louis and I are planning to lead our second Valentine Lovers' Hike. And this time we hope at least a few lovers-in-waiting will join us.



Glen Park resident Jeanne Halpern has published articles about travel, family, and health in the *New York Times*, *Woman's Day*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and a dozen or so other publications. She also taught American literature and authored several books during her eight years as a professor at Purdue University in Indiana. Since retiring, she's written mainly personal essays and memoirs, and her favorite is "Betting on Uncle Louis," which is included in Paul Auster's 2001 collection *I Thought My Father Was God*. She also has an essay in the Wednesday Writers' anthology, *Something That Matters*, 2007. For 18 years, she's been a Sierra Club hike leader in San Francisco, conducting about two dozen hikes, including "Diamonds in the Rough," which featured four parks and playgrounds in Noe Valley.

Halpern invites *Noe Valley Voice* readers to join her and her partner of 15 years, Louis Prisco, on their Valentine Lovers' Hike on Mount Tamalpais, Saturday, Feb. 9. It starts at 9:15 a.m. at the California Alpine Club, 730 Panoramic Highway, Mill Valley, near the Mountain Home Inn. For more information, call 415-841-1254.

The Noe Valley Voice invites you to submit fiction, literary nonfiction, or poetry for publication on the Last Page. Please mail manuscripts, which should be no more than 1,500 words, to the Noe Valley Voice, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. Or email lastpage@noevalleyvoice.com. Don't forget to include your name, address, and phone number, and an SASE if you want your manuscript returned. We look forward to hearing from you.